49

SALATHIEL.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

A STORY OF

THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND

THE FUTURE.

1067

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1828.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL, THE TANJORE
49

SALATHIEL.

CHAPTER I.

THE evening came at last; the burning calm was followed by a breeze breathing of life; and on the sky sailed, as if it were wafted by that gentle breeze, the evening star. The lifeless silence of the desert began to be broken by a variety of sounds, wild and sad enough in themselves, but softening by distance, and not ill suited to that declining hour, which is so natural an emblem of the decline of life. The moaning of the shepherd's horn; the low of

the folding herds; the long, deep cry of the camel; even the scream of the vulture wheeling home from the corpse left by some recent wreck on the shore; and the howl of the jackall venturing out on the edge of dusk, came with no unpleasing melancholy upon the wind.

We stood gazing impatiently from the tent-door at the west, that still glowed like a furnace of molten gold.

"Will that sun never go down?" said I. "We must wait his leisure; and he seems determined to tantalize us."

"Yes; like a rich old man, determined to try the patience of his heirs; and more tenacious of his wealth, the more his powers of enjoyment decay."

"Philosophy, from those young lips! Yet, the desert is the place for a philosopher."

"That I deny," said my sportive companion. "Philosophy is good for nothing, where it has nothing to ridicule, and where it will be neither fed nor flattered. Its true place is the world; as much as the true place

A28·1

of yonder falcon is wherever it can find any thing to pounce upon. Here your philosopher must labour for himself, and laugh at himself; an indulgence in which he is the most temperate of men. In short, he is fit only for the idle, gay, ridiculous, and timid world. The desert is the soil for a much nobler plant. If you would train a poet into flower, set him here."

"Or a plunderer."

"No doubt.—They are sometimes much the same."

"But the desert produces nothing—but Arabs."

"There are some minds even among Arabs: and some of their rhapsodies are beauty itself. The very master of this tent, who fought and killed, I dare not say how many, to secure so precious a prize as myself; and who, after all his heroism, would have sold me into slavery for life, spent half his evenings sitting at this door, chanting to every star of heaven, and rhyming, with tears in his eyes, to all kinds of tender remembrances."

" But he was a genius, a heaven-born accident; and his merit was the more in being a genius in the midst of such a scene."

" No—every thing round us this hour is poetry. The silence—those broken sounds that make the silence more striking as they decay—those fiery continents of cloud, the empire of that greatest of sheiks the sun, lord of the red desert of the air—the immeasurable desert below! Vastness, obscurity, and terror, the three spirits that work the profoundest wonders of the poet, are here in their native region. And now," she said, with a look that showed there were other spells than poetry to be found in the desert, " to release you; I know by signs infallible that the sun is setting."

I could not avoid laughing at the mimic wisdom with which she announced her discovery; and asked whence she had acquired the faculty of solving such rare problems.

" Oh, by my incomparable knowledge of the stars." She pointed to the eastern sky, on which they began to cluster in showers of diamond. " I have to thank the desert for it;

and," she added with a slight submission of voice, "for every thing.—I am a daughter of the desert; the first sight that I saw was a camel; my early, my only accomplishments were, to ride, sing Bedoween songs, tell Bedoween stories, and tame a young panther. But, my history draws to a close. While I was supreme in the graces of a savage; had learned to sit a dromedary, throw the lance, make alhaiks, and gallop for a week together; love, resistless love, came in my way. The son of the sheik, heir to a hundred quarrels, and ten thousand sheep, goats, and horses, claimed me as his natural prey. I shrank from a husband, even more accomplished than myself; and was meditating how to make my escape, whether into the wilderness, or into the bottom of the sea; when a summons came, which, or the money that came with it, the sheik found irresistible. And now, my history is at an end."

"And so," said I, to provoke her to the rest of her narrative, "your story ends, as usual,

with marriage. You, of course, finding that you had nothing to prevent your leaving the desert, took the female resolution of staying in it; and, as you might discard the young sheik at your pleasure, refused to have any other human being."

"Can you think me capable of such a horror!" She stamped her little foot in indignation on the ground; then turning on me with her flashing eye, penetrated the stratagem at once by my smile.

"Then, hear the rest. I mounted my dromedary; galloped for three days without sleep; and, at length, saw the towers of Jerusalem—glorious Jerusalem. I passed through crowds that seemed to me a gathering of the world; streets that astonished me with a thousand strange sights; and, overwhelmed with magnificence, delight, and fatigue, arrived at a palace, where I was met by a host of half-adoring domestics; and was led to the most venerable and beloved of wise and holy men, who caught me to his heart, called me Naomi,

his child, his hope; and shed tears and blessings on my head, as the sole survivor of his illustrious line."

The recollection of the good and heroic high-priest was strong with us both; and in silence I suffered her sorrows to have their way.

A faint echo of horns and voices roused me.

"Look to the hills," I exclaimed; as I saw a long black line creeping, like a march of ants, down the side of a distant range of sand.

"Those are our Arabs," said she, without a change of countenance. "They are, of course, coming to see what the angel or demon who visited them to-day has left in witness of his formidable presence. But, from what I overheard of their terrors, no Arab will venture near the tents till night; night, the general veil of the iniquities of this pleasant and very wicked world."

"Yet how shall we traverse the sands on foot?"

"Forbid it, the spirit of romance. I must see whether the gallantry of the sheik has not provided against that misfortune." She flew into the tent, and, drawing back a curtain, showed me two mares of the most famous breed of Arabia.

"Here are the Koshlani," said she, with playful malice dancing in her eyes. "I saw them brought in in triumph last night, stolen from the pastures of Achmet ben Ali himself, first horse-stealer and prince of the Bedoweens, who is doubtless by this time half dead of grief at the loss of the two gems of his stud. I heard the achievement told with great rejoicings; and a very curious specimen of dexterity it was. Come forth," said she, leading out two beautiful animals, white as milk. "Come forth, you two lovely orphans of the true breed of Solomon;—princesses with pedigrees that put kings to shame, unless they can go back two thousand years; birds of the Bedoween, with wings to your feet, stars for eyes, and ten times the sense of your masters, in your little tossing heads."

She sprang upon her courser, and winded it with the delight of practised skill. The Arabs were now but a few miles off, and in full gallop towards us. I urged her to ride away at once. But she continued curvetting and manœuvring her spirited steed, that, enjoying the free air of the desert after having been shut up so long, threw up its red nostrils in the wind, and bounded like a stag.

" A moment yet," said she, " I have not quite done with the Arab. It is certainly bad treatment for his hospitality, to have plundered him of his dinner, his money, and his horses."

" And of his captive; a loss beyond all reparation."

" I perfectly believe so," was the laughing answer; " but I have been thinking of making him a reparation, which any Arab on earth would think worth even my charms. I have been contriving how to make his fortune."

" By returning his shekels?"

" Not a grain of them shall he ever see. No; he shall not have the sorrow to think that he entertained only a princess and a philosopher.

As a spirit you came, and as a spirit you shall depart; and he shall have the honour of telling the tale. The national stories of such matters are worn out; he shall have a new one of his own; and every emir in the kingdoms of Ishmael, through the fiery sands of Ichama; the riverless mountains of Nayd; Hejoz, the country of flies and fools; and Yemen, the land of locusts, lawyers, and merchants, will rejoice to have him at his meal. The man's fortune is made; for there is no access to the heart, like that of being necessary to the dinners, and dulness, of the mighty."

"Or, on the strength of the wonder," said I, "he may make wonders of his own: turn charlatan of the first magnitude; profess to cure the incurable, and get solid gold for empty pretension; sell health to the epicure, gaiety to the old, and charms to the repulsive; defy the course of nature, and live like a prince upon the exhaustless revenue of human absurdity."

A cloud of smoke wreathed up from the sheik's tent, fire followed, and even while we

looked on, the wind, carrying the burning fragments, set the whole camp in a blaze. The Arabs gave a shriek, and fled back, scattering with gestures and cries of terror through the sands.

"There—there," said my companion, clapping her delicate white palms in exultation: "let them beware of making women captives in future. In my final visit to the tent, I put a firebrand into the very bundle of carpets in which I played the part of slave."

"Not to be your representative, I presume."

"Yes, with only the distinction, that in time I should have been much the more perilous of the two. If that unlucky sheik had dared to keep me a week longer in his detestable tent, I should have raised a rebellion in the tribe, dethroned him, and turned princess on my own account. As to burning him out, there was no remedy. But for those flames, the tribe would have been upon our road. But for those flames, we might even have been mistaken for mere mortals; and your Spirits always vanish,

as we do, in fire and smoke. How nobly those tents blaze! Now; forward."

She gave the reins to her barb, flung a triumphant gesture towards the burning camp, and, under cover of a huge sheet of fiery vapour, we darted into the wilderness.

CHAPTER II.

I DIRECTED our flight towards Masada. The stars were brilliant guides; and the coolness of the Arabian night, which forms so singular a contrast to the overpowering ardours of the day, relieved us from the chief obstacle of desert travel. At day-break we reached a tract near the sea-shore, whose broken and burnt-up ground showed that there had lately encamped the army, the sound of whose march filled my reveries in the island.

It was evening when I caught the glimpse of the distant mountain of the fortress. My heart bounded fearfully at the sight. An impression of evil was upon me. Yet I must go on, or die.

"There," said I, "you see my home, and yours, while you desire it. You will find friends, delighted to receive you, and a protection, that neither Roman nor Arab can violate. Heaven grant that all may be as when I left Masada!"

The fair girl gratefully thanked me.

"I have been long," said she, "unused to kindness; and its voice overpowers me. But, if the duty, the gratitude, the faithful devotedness of the orphan to her generous preserver, can deserve protection, I shall yet have some claim. Suffer me to be your daughter."

She bowed her head before me with filial reverence; I took the outstretched hand, that quivered in mine, and pressed it to my lips. The sacred compact was ratified in the sight of Heaven. More formal treaties have been made; but few sincerer.

We rapidly advanced to the foot of the ridge that, now defining and extending, showed its well-known features in their rugged grandeur. But, to come in sight of the fortress, I had still one of the huge buttresses of the mountain to round. My companion, with the

quick sympathy that makes one of the finest charms of woman, already shared in my ominous fears, and rode by my side without a word. My eyes were fixed on the ground.—I was roused by a clash of warlike music. The suspense was terribly at an end.

The spears of a legion were moving in a glittering line down the further declivity. Squadrons of horse in marching order were drawn up on the plain. The baggage of a little army lay under the eye, waiting for the escort of the troops now descending from the fortress. The story of my ruin was told in that single glance. All was lost.

The walls of the citadel, breached in every direction, gave signs of a long siege. The White Stag of Naphtali no longer lifted its head in pride on the battlements: dismantling and desolation were there. But what horrors must have been wrought, before the Romans could shake the strength of those walls! In what grave was I to look for my noble brother and my kinsmen? Last and most

fearful, what had been the fate of Miriam and my children!

Conscious that to stay was to give myself and my trembling companion to the cruel mercy of Rome, I yet was unable to leave the spot. I hovered round it as the spirit might hover round the tomb. Maddening with bitter yearnings of heart, that intense eagerness to know the worst, which is next to despair, I spurred up the steep by an obscure path that led me to a postern.

There was no sound within.

I dashed through the streets. Not a living being was to be seen; piles of fire-wood lighted under the principal buildings and at the gates, showed that the fortress was destined to immediate overthrow. War had done its worst. The broad sanguine plashes on the pavements showed that the battle had been fought long and desperately within the walls. The famous armoury was a heap of ashes. Ditches dug across the streets, and strewed with broken weapons, and the white remnants of what once

was man; walls raised within walls, and now broken down; stately houses loop-holed and turned into little fortresses; fragments of noble architecture blocking up the breaches; graves dug in every spot where the spade could open a few feet of ground; fragments of superb furniture lying half-burnt, where the defenders had been forced out by conflagration; gave sad evidence of the struggle of brave men against overpowering numbers.

But where were they, who had made the prize so dear to the conquerors? Was I treading on the clay that once breathed patriotism and love? Did the wreck on which I leaned, as I gazed round this mighty mausoleum, cover the earthly tenement of my kinsmen, and still dearer, the last of my name? Was I treading on the grave of those gentle and lovely natures, for whose happiness I would rejoicingly have laid down the sceptre of the world?

In my agitation I spoke aloud. My voice rang through the solitude round me, and returned on the ear with a startling distinctness. Living sounds suddenly mingled with the echo.

A low groan came from the pile of ruins beside me. I listened, as one might listen for an answer from the sepulchre. The voice was heard again. A few stones from the shattered wall gave way, and I saw thrust out the withered, bony hand of a human being. I tore down the remaining impediments, and saw, pale, emaciated, and at the point of death by famine, my friend, my fellow-soldier, my fellow-sufferer, Jubal!

Joy is sometimes as dangerous as sorrow. He gave a glance of recognition, struggled forward, and, uttering a wild cry, fell senseless into my arms. On his recovering; before I could ask him the question nearest to my heart, it was answered. "They are safe, all safe," said he. "On the landing of fresh troops from Italy, the first efforts of the legions were directed against this fortress. The pirates, in return for the victory to which you led them, had set me at liberty. I made my way through the enemy's posts; Eleazar, ever generous and noble, received me after all my wanderings with the heart of a father; and we determined on defending this glorious trophy of your he-

roism to the last man. But, with the wisdom that never failed him, he knew what must be the result; and at the very commencement of the siege sent away your family to Alexandria, where they might be secure of protection from our kindred."

"And they went by sea?" I asked shudderingly, while the whole terrible truth dawned upon my mind.

"It was the only course. The country was filled with the enemy."

"Then they are lost! Wretched father, now no father. Man marked by destiny. The blow has fallen at last. They perished. I saw them perish. Their dying shrieks rang in these ears. I was their destroyer. From first to last, I have been their undoing!"

Jubal looked on me with astonishment. My adopted daughter, without any idle attempt at consolation, only bathed my hand in her tears.

"There must be some misconception here," said Jubal. "Before we left that accursed dungeon, they had embarked with a crowd of females from the surrounding country in one of

the annual fleets for Egypt. Before we sailed from the pirate's cavern, they were probably safe in Alexandria."

"No! I saw them perish. I heard their dying cry. I drove them, involuntarily but surely drove them, to destruction," was the only voice that my withering lips could utter. I remembered the horrors of the storm; the desperate efforts of the merchant galley to escape; its fatal disappearance. Faintly, and with many a reviving agony, I gave the melancholy reasons for my belief. My auditors listened with fear and trembling.

"There is now no use in sorrow," said Jubal sternly, "and as little in struggle. I too have lived till the light that lightened my dreary hours is extinguished. I have known the extremities of passion. If suffering could have atoned for my offences, I have suffered. A thousand years of existence could not teach me more. Here let us die." He unsheathed his poniard.

"Here let us die!" I exclaimed with him, and my poniard glittered in my hand.

My young companion, in the anxiety of the moment, forgetting the presence of a stranger, flung back the veil which had hitherto covered her face and figure, and clasping my half-raised arm, said in a tone, so low, yet penetrating, that it seemed the whispers of my own conscience—

"Has death no fears?" She fixed her eyes on me; and waited breathless for the answer.

"Daughter of beauty," said Jubal, as a smile of admiration played on his sad features, "thoughts like ours are not for the lovely and the young. May the Heaven that has stamped that countenance be your protection through many a year! But, to the weary, rest is happiness, not terror. Prince of Naphtali, this fair maiden's presence forbids darker thoughts; we must speed her on her way to security, before we can think of ourselves and our misfortunes."

"The daughter of Ananus," said she, in a tone of heroic pride, "has no fears. The boldest warrior of Israel never died more boldly than that venerable parent. Within his sacred robes there was the heart of a soldier, a patriot,

and a king. Let me die for a cause like his; at the foot of the altar, let my blood be poured out for my country; let this feeble form sink in the ruins of the Temple; and death will be of all welcome things the most welcome. But I would not die for a fantasy, for idleness, for nothing; put up those weapons, warriors, and let us go forth and see whether great things are not yet to be done."

She significantly pointed towards Jerusalem.

"It is too late," said Jubal, glancing with a sigh at his own wasted form.

"What?" said the heroine; "is it too late to be virtuous, but not too late to be guilty; too late to resist the enemies of our country, but not too late to make ourselves worthless to her holy cause? If Heaven demands an account of every wasted talent, and mispent hour, what fearful account will be theirs who make all talents, and all hours, useless at a blow!"

"Maiden, you have not known what it is to lose every thing that made earth a place of hope," said I, gazing with wonder and pity on the fine enthusiasm that the world is so fatally

empowered to destroy. "May not the tired traveller hasten to the end of his journey without a crime?"

"May not the slave," said Jubal, "weary of his chain, escape unchidden from his captivity?"

"And may not the soldier quit his post, when caprice disgusts him with his duty?" was the maiden's answer, with a lofty look. "Or may not the child break loose from the place of instruction, and plead his disgust at discipline? As well may man, placed here for the service of the highest and most benevolent of beings, plead his own narrow and ignorant will against the supreme command; daringly charge Heaven with the injustice of setting him a task above his strength, and madly insult its power under the hollow pretext of relying on its compassion.—This wisdom is not my own. It was the last gift of an illustrious parent, when, in my agony at the sight of his mortal wounds, I longed to follow him. "Live," said he, "while you can live with virtue. The God who has placed us on earth, best knows when and how to recall us. If self-destruction were no crime

in one instance, it would be no crime to universal mankind; the whole frame of society would be overthrown by a permission to evade its duties on the easy penalty of dying. Our obligations to country, family, man, and Heaven, would be perpetually flung off; if they were to be held at the caprice of human insensibility."

Jubal looked intently on the young oracle; and, bending with oriental deference, was yet unconvinced. "Man was not made to endure, when endurance is useless. Is there to be no end to the mind's anxiety, but the tardy decay of the frame? Is there no time for the return of the exile? or, what is this very feeling of despair, but a voice within—an unwritten command to die!"

Naomi turned to me, with a look imploring my aid. But I was broken down with the tidings that had just reached me. Jubal wrapped his cloak round him, and was striding into the shadow of the ruin. Naomi, terrified at the idea of death, seized the corner of his mantle. "Will you shrink from the evils of

life?" she adjured, "and yet have the dreadful courage to defy the wrath of Heaven? Shall worms like us, shall creatures covered with weaknesses and sins, whose only hope must be in mercy, commit a crime that by its very nature disclaims supplication, and makes repentance impossible?"

With the energy of fear, she threw back the folds of the cloak, and arrested the hand, with the dagger already unsheathed in it. She led back the reluctant, yet unresisting step of the suicide, and said, in a voice still trembling: "Prince of Naphtali, save your brother." I held out my arms to Jubal; the sternness of his soul was past, and he fell upon my neck. Naomi stood, exulting in her triumph, with the countenance that an angel might wear at the return of a sinner.

"Prince of Naphtali," said she, "if those who were dear to you have perished, which Heaven avert! you may have been thus but the more marked out for the instrument of solemn uses to Israel. The virtues that might have languished in the happiness of home, may be

summoned into vigour for mankind. Warrior," and she turned her glowing smile on Jubal, "this is not the time for valour and experience to shrink from the side of our country. Faction may be repelled by patriotism; violence put down by wisdom; the powers of the people roused by the example of a hero; even the last spark of life may be made splendid by mingling with the last glories of the chosen people of God."

Jubal's wasted cheek reddened with the theme; but his emotion was too deep for language: he led the way; we passed in silence through the silent streets; and, without seeing the face of a human being, reached the dismantled gates of Masada.

CHAPTER III.

JUBAL guided us down the declivities among ramparts and trenches; and after long windings, where every step reminded us of havoc, brought us to a little hamlet in the recesses of the valley, so secluded, that it seemed never to have heard the sound of war.

The thunder of the falling masses of fortification as the fire reached their props, awoke me soon after midnight; and I arose and tasted the delicious air that makes the summer night of Asia the time of refreshing alike to the frame and to the mind. I found Jubal already abroad, and gazing on the summit of the mountain, where the sullen glare of the sky, and the crash

of buildings, showed that the work of devastation was rapidly going on.

He gave me some of the details of the siege. The Romans had found the fortress so hazardous to the advance of their reinforcements, that its possession was essential to the conquest of Judea. Cestius, my old antagonist, solicited the command, to wipe off his disgrace; and the whole force of the legions was brought up. But the generalship of Eleazar, and the intrepidity of the garrison baffled every assault, with tremendous loss to the enemy. The siege was next turned into a blockade. Famine and disease were more formidable than the sword; and the brave defenders were reduced to a number scarcely able to man the walls.

"We now," said Jubal, "fought the battle of despair: we saw the enemy's camp crowded every day with fresh troops, and the provisions of the whole country brought among them in lavish profusion, while we had not a morsel to eat, while our fountains ran dry, and our few troops were harassed with mortal fatigue. Yet no man thought of surrender. Eleazar's

courage, — a courage sustained by higher thoughts than those of the soldier, the fortitude of piety and prayer,—inspired us all, and we went to our melancholy duties with the calmness of those to whom the grave was inevitable.

"At last, when our reduced numbers gave the enemy a hope of overpowering the defence, we were attacked by their whole force. But, if they expected to conquer us at their ease, never were men more deceived. When the walls gave way before their machines, they were fought from street to street, from house to house, from chamber to chamber. Eleazar, active as wise, was everywhere; we fought in ruins—in fire. Multitudes of the enemy perished; and more deaths were given by the knife than the spear; for our arms were long since exhausted. The last effort was made on the spot where you found me. When every defence was mastered by the perpetual supply of fresh troops, Eleazar, passing through the subterranean to attack the Roman rear, left me in command of the few that survived. We intrenched ourselves in the armoury. For

three days we fought, without tasting food, without an hour's sleep, without laying the weapons out of our hands. At length the final assault was given. In the midst of it we heard shouts which told us that our friends had made the concerted attack; but we were too few and feeble to second it. The shouts died away —we were overpowered; and my first sensation of returning life was the combined agony of famine, wounds, and suffocation, under the ruins that I then thought my living grave."

"By dawn," said I, "we must set out for Jerusalem."

"It has been closely invested for the last three months; and famine and faction are doing their worst within the walls. Titus is without, at the head of a hundred thousand of the legionaries and allies. To enter will be next to impossible; and when once entered, what will be before you but the madness of civil discord, and finally, death by the hands of an enemy utterly infuriated against our nation?"

"To Jerusalem, at all risks; my fate is mingled with that of the last stronghold of our

fallen people. What matters it to one whose roots of happiness are cut up like mine, in what spot he struggles with man and fortune? As a son of Judea my powers are due to her cause, and every drop of my blood shed for any other would be treason to the memory of my fathers. The dawn finds me on my way to Jerusalem."

"It is spoken like a prince of Naphtali; but I must not follow you. The course of glory is cut off for me; unless something may still be done by collecting the fugitives of the tribes, and harassing the Roman communications. But Jerusalem, though every stone of her walls is precious to my soul, must not receive my guilty steps. I have horrid recollections of things seen and done there. My mind is still too full of the impulses that drove it to frenzy. Onias, that wily hypocrite, will be there to fill me with visions of terror. There too are—others." He was silent; but suddenly resuming his firmness, "I have no hostility to Constantius; I even honour and esteem him; but my spirit is still too feverish to bear his presence. I must live and die far from all that I have ever known."

He hid his face in his mantle; but the agitation of his form showed more than clamorous grief. He walked forth into the darkness. I was ignorant of his purpose, and lingered long for his return. But I saw him no more.

Disturbed and pained by his loss, I had scarcely thrown myself on the cottage floor, my only bed, when I was roused by the cries of the village. A detachment of Roman cavalry marching for Jerusalem had entered, and was taking up its quarters for the night. The peasantry could make no resistance, and attempted none. I had only time to call to my adopted daughter to rise, when our hut was occupied, and we were made prisoners.

This was an unexpected blow; yet it was one to which, on second thoughts, I was reconciled. In the disturbed state of the country travelling was totally insecure, and even to obtain a conveyance of any kind was a matter of extreme difficulty. The roving plunderers that hovered in the train of the camp were, of all plunderers, the most merciless. By falling into the hands

of the legionaries we were at least sure of an escort; I might obtain some useful information of their affairs; and, once in sight of the city, might escape from the Roman lines with more ease as a prisoner, than I could pass them as an enemy.

The cavalry moved at day-break; and before night we saw in the horizon the hills that surround Jerusalem. But we had full evidence of our approach to the centre of struggle, by the devastation that follows the track of the best disciplined army; groves and orchards cut down; corn-fields trampled; cottages burnt; gardens and homesteads ravaged. Further on, we traversed the encampments of the auxiliaries, barbarians of every colour and language within the limits of the mightiest of empires.

To the soldier of civilised nations war is a new state of existence. To the soldier of barbarism war is but a more active species of his daily life. It requires no divorce from his old habits, and even encourages his old objects, cares and pleasures. We found the Arab, the German, the Scythian, and the

Ethiop, hunting, carousing, trafficking and quarrelling, as if they had never stirred from their native regions. The hordes brought with them their families, their cattle, and their trade. In the rear of every auxiliary camp was a regular mart, crowded with all kinds of dealers. Through the fields the barbarians were following the sports of home. Trains of falconers were flying their birds at the wild pigeon and heron. Half-naked horsemen were running races, without saddle or rein, on horses wild and swift as the antelope. Groups were lying under the palm-groves asleep, with their spears fixed at their heads; others were seen busy decorating themselves for battle; crowds were dancing, gaming, and drinking.

As we advanced, we could hear the variety of clamours and echoes that belong to barbarian war—the braying of savage horns, the roars of mirth, rage, and feasting; the shouts of clans moving up to reinforce the besiegers; the screams and lamentations of the innumerable women as the wains and litters brought back the wounded; the barbarian howlings over the hasty grave

of some chieftain; the ferocious revelry of the discoverers of plunder, and the inextinguishable sorrows of the captives.

We passed through some miles of this boisterous and bustling scene, in which even a Roman escort was scarcely a sufficient security. The barbarians thronged round us, brandished their spears over our heads, rode their horses full gallop against us, and exhausted the whole language of scorn, ridicule, and wrath, upon our helpless condition.

But the clamour gradually died away, and we entered upon another region, totally denuded of life and of the means of life; a zone of silence and solitude interposed between the dangerous riot of barbarism and the severe regularity of the legions. Far within this circle we reached the Roman camp; the world of disciplined war.

The setting sun threw his flame on the long vistas of shield and helmet drawn out, according to custom, for the hour of exercise before nightfall. The tribunes were on horseback in front of the cohorts, putting them through that boundless variety of admirable movements, in

which no soldiery were so dexterous as those of Rome. But all was done with characteristic silence. No sound was heard but the measured tramp of the manœuvre, and the voice of the tribune. The sight was at once absorbing to the eye of one, like me, an enthusiast in soldiership, and appalling to the lover of his country. Before me was the great machine, the resistless, living energy, that had levelled the strength of the most renowned kingdoms. With the feeling of a man who sees the tempest at hand; in the immediate terror of the bolt, I could yet gaze with wonder and admiration at the grandeur of the thunder cloud.

Before me was at once the perfection of power and the perfection of discipline. Here were no rambling crowds of retainers, no hurryings of troops startled by sudden attack, no military clamours. All was calm, regular, and grand. In a country, the seat of the most furious war ever waged, I might have thought that I saw but a summer camp in an Italian plain.

As the night fell, the legions saluted the parting sun with homage, according to a custom

which they had learned in their eastern campaigns. Sounds, less of war than of worship, arose; flutes breathed in low and dulcet harmonies from the lines; and this iron soldiery, bound on the business of extermination, moved to their tents in the midst of strains made to wrap the heart in softness and solemnity.

I awoke at sun-rise. But was I in a land of enchantment? I looked for the immense camp: —it had vanished. A few soldiers collecting the prisoners sleeping about the field were all that remained of an army. Our guard explained the wonder. An attack on the trenches, in which the besiegers had been driven in with serious loss, had determined Titus to bring up his whole force. The troops moved with that habitual silence which eluded almost the waking ear. They were now beyond the hills, and the hour was come at which the prisoners were ordered to follow them.

But where was the daughter of Ananus? I had placed her in a tent with some captive females of our nation. The tent was struck, and its inmates were gone. On the spot where

it stood, a flock of sheep were already grazing, with a Roman soldier leaning drowsily on his spear for their shepherd.

To what alarms might not this fair girl be exposed? Dubious and distressed, I followed the guard in the hope of discovering the fate of an innocent and lovely child, who seemed, like myself, marked for misfortune.

In this march we went almost the whole circuit of the hills surrounding Jerusalem: and I thus had for three days the opportunity that I longed for, of seeing the nature of the force with which we were to contend. The troops were admirably armed. There was nothing for superfluity; yet those who conceived the system, knew the value of show, and the equipments of the officers were superb. The helmets, cuirasses, and swords, were frequently inlaid with the precious metals; and the superior officers rode richly caparisoned chargers, purchased at an enormous price from the finest studs of Europe and Asia. The common soldier was proud of the brightness of his shield and helmet: on duty both were covered; but

on their festivals, the most cheering moment was when the order was given to uncase their arms. Then, nothing could be more beautiful than the aspect of the legion. One striking source of its pomp was the multitude of banners; every emblem that mythology could feign, every animal, every memorial connected with the history of soldiership and Rome, glittered above the forest of spears; gilded serpents, wolves, lions, gods, genii, stars, diadems, imperial busts, and the eagle paramount over all, were mingled with vanes of purple and embroidery. The most showy pageant of civil life was dull and colourless to the crowded magnificence of the Roman line.

Their system of manœuvre gave this magnificence its full development. With the ancient armies the principle was the concentration of force. All was done by impulse. The figure by which the greatest weight could be driven against the enemy's ranks, was the secret of victory. The subtlety of Italian imagination enlightened by Greek science, and fertilised by the experience of universal war, was occupied in

the discovery; and the field exercise of the legions displayed every form into which troops could be thrown.

The Romans always sought to fight pitched battles. They left the minor services to their allies; and haughtily reserved themselves for the master-strokes by which empires are lost or won. The humbler hostilities, the obscure skirmishings and surprises, they disdained; observing that, while "to steal upon men was the work of a thief, and to butcher them was the habit of a barbarian; to fight them was the act of a soldier."

CHAPTER IV.

At the close of a weary day we reached our final station, upon the hill Scopas, seven furlongs from Jerusalem. Bitter memory was busy with me there. From the spot on which I flung myself in heaviness of heart, huddled among a crowd of miserable captives, and wishing only that the evening gathering over me might be my last, I had once looked upon the army of the oppressors marching into my toils, and exulted in the secure glories of myself and my country.

But the prospect now beneath the eye showed only the fiery track of invasion. The pastoral beauty of the plain was utterly gone.

The innumerable garden-houses and summer dwellings of the Jewish nobles, gleaming in every variety of graceful architecture, among vineyards and depths of aromatic foliage, were levelled to the ground; and the gardens turned into a sandy waste, cut up by trenches and military works in every direction. In the midst rose the great Roman rampart, which Titus, in despair of conquering the city by the sword, drew round it to extinguish its last hope of provisions or reinforcements; a hideous boundary, within which all was to be the sepulchre.

I saw Jerusalem only in her expiring struggle. Others have given the history of that most memorable siege. My knowledge was limited to the last hideous days of an existence long declining, and finally extinguished in horrors beyond the imagination of man.

I knew her follies, her ingratitude, her crimes; but the love of the city of David was deep in my soul; her lofty privileges, the proud memory of those who had made her courts glorious, the sage, the soldier, and the prophet, lights of the world, to which the boasted illumi-

nation of the heathen was darkness, filled my spirit with an immortal homage. I loved her then, I love her still.

To mingle my blood with that of my perishing country was the first wish of my heart. But I was under the rigour of the confinement inflicted on the Jewish prisoners. My rank was known; and while it produced offers of new distinction from my captors, it increased their vigilance. To every temptation I gave the same denial, and occupied my hours in devices for escape. In the meanwhile, I saw with terror that the wall of circumvallation was closing; and that a short period must place an impassable barrier between me and the city.

After a day of anxious gazing on the progress of this wall of destiny, I was aroused at midnight by the roaring of one of those tempests, which sometimes break in so fiercely upon an eastern summer. The lightning struck the old tower in which I was confined, and I found myself riding on a pile of ruins. Escape, in the midst of a Roman camp, seemed as remote as ever. But the storm which shook solid

walls, made its way at will among tents, and the whole encampment was broken up. A column of infantry passed where I was extricating myself from the ruins. They were going to reinforce the troops in the trenches against the chance of an attack during the tempest. I followed them. The night was terrible. The lightning that blazed with frightful vividness, and then left the sky to tenfold obscurity, led us through the lines. The column was too late, and it found the besieged already mounted upon the wall of circumvallation, and flinging it down in huge fragments. The assault and defence were alike desperate. The night grew pitchy dark, and the only evidence that men were round me, was the clang of arms.

A sudden flash showed me that I had reached the foot of the rampart. The besieged, carried away by their native impetuosity, poured down in crowds. Their leader, cheering them on, was struck by a lance, and fell. The sight rallied the enemy. I felt that now or never was the moment for my escape. I rushed in front, and called out my name. At the voice the wounded

leader uttered a cry which I well knew. I caught him from the ground. A gigantic centurion darted forward, and grasped my robe. Embarrassed with my burden, I was on the point of being dragged back; the centurion's sword glittered over my head. With my only weapon, a stone, I struck him a furious blow on the forehead. The sword fell from his grasp; I seized it, and keeping the rest at bay, and in the midst of shouts from my countrymen, leaped the trench, with the nobler trophy in my arms. I had rescued Constantius!

Jerusalem was now verging on the last horrors. I could scarcely find my way through her ruins. The noble buildings were destroyed by conflagration, or the assaults of the various factions. The monuments of our kings and tribes were lying in mutilation at my feet. Every man of former eminence was gone. Massacre and exile were the masters of the higher ranks; and even the accidental distinctions into which the humbler in birth or opulence were thrown by the few past years, involved a fearful purchase of public hazard. Like men in an earthquake, the ele-

vation of each was only a sign to him of the working of an irresistible principle of ruin. But the most formidable characteristic was the change wrought upon the popular mind.

A single revolution may be a source of public good. But a succession of great political changes is fatal alike to public and private virtue. The sense of honour dies; in the fierce pressures of personal struggle. Humanity dies; in the sight of hourly violences. Conscience dies; in the conflict where personal safety is so often endangered, that its preservation at length usurps the entire mind. Religion dies; where the religious man is so often the victim of the unprincipled. Violence and vice are soon found to be the natural instruments of triumph in a war of the passions; and the more relentless atrocity carries the day, until selfishness, the mother of treachery, rapine, and carnage, is the paramount principle. Then the nation perishes; or is sent forth in madness and misery, an object of terror and infection, to propagate evil through the world.

The very features of the popular physi-

ognomy were changed. The natural vividness of the countenance was there, but hardened and clouded by habitual ferocity. I was surrounded by a multitude, in each of whom I was compelled to see the assassin. The keen eye scowled with cruelty ; the cheek wore the alternate flush and paleness of desperate thoughts. The hurried gatherings—the quick quarrel—the loud blasphemy, told me the infuriate temper that had fallen, for the last curse, on Jerusalem. Scarcely a man passed me of whom I could not have said, " There goes one from a murder, or to a murder."

But more open evidences startled me, accustomed as I was to scenes of military violence. I saw men stabbed in familiar greetings in the streets; mansions set on fire and burned in the face of day, with their inmates screaming for help, and yet unhelped; hundreds slain in rabble tumults, of which no one knew the origin. The streets were covered with the wrecks of pillage, sumptuous furniture plundered from the mansions of the great, and plundered for the mere love of ruin; mingled with the more

hideous wrecks of man—unburied bodies, and skeletons, left to whiten in the blast, or to be torn by the dogs.

Three factions divided Jerusalem, even while the Roman battering-rams were shaking her colossal towers. Three armies fought night and day within the city, carrying on the operations of war with more than civil fury. Streets undermined, houses battered down, granaries burned, wells poisoned, the perpetual shower of death from the roofs, made the external hostility trivial: and the Romans required only patience to have been bloodless masters of a city, which yet they would have found only a tomb of its people.

I wandered, an utter stranger, through Jerusalem. All the familiar faces were gone. At an early period of the war many of the higher ranks, foreseeing the event, had left the city; at a later, my victory over Cestius, by driving back the enemy, gave a free passage to a crowd of others. It was at that time remarked that the chief fugitives were Christians; and a singular prophecy of their Master was declared to be the warning of their escape.

It is certain that, of his followers, including many even of our priests and learned men, scarcely one remained. They declared that the evil menaced by the Divine Wisdom through Moses—(may he rest in glory!) was come; that the death of their Master was the consummating crime; and that, in the Romans, the nation "of a strange speech," flying on "eagle wings from the ends of the earth," was already commissioned against a people stained with the blood of the Messiah.

Fatally was the word of the great prophet of Israel accomplished; fearfully fell the sword to smite away root and branch; solemnly, and by a hand which scorned the strength of man, was the deluge of ruin let loose against the throne of David. And still, through almost two thousand years, the flood of desolation is at the full; no mountain-top is seen rising; no spot is left clear for the sole of the Jewish foot; no dove returns with the olive. Eternal King, shall this be for ever! Wilt thou utterly reject the children of him whom thy right hand brought from

the land of the idolater! Wilt thou for ever hide thy might from the tribes whom thy servant Moses led through the burning wilderness! Wilt thou not bring back the broken kingdom of thy servant Israel! Still we wander in darkness, the tenants of a prison whose walls we feel at every step: the scoff of the idolater; the captive of the infidel; have we not abided without king or priest, or ephod or teraphim, many days; and when are those days to be at an end!

Yet, is not the deluge at last about to subside! Is not the trumpet at the lip to summon thy chosen; are not the broken tribes now awaiting thy command to come from the desert—from the sea—from the dungeon—from the mine—like the light from darkness? I gaze upon the stars, and think, countless and glorious as they are, such shall yet be thy multitude and thy splendour, people of the undone! The promise of the King of Kings is fulfilling; and even now, to my withered eyes, to my struggling prayer, to the deeper agonies of a supplication that no

O111,3,8
A28.1

tongue can utter, there is a vision and an answer.—On my knees worn by the flint, I hear the midnight voice; and weeping wait for the day that will come, though heaven and earth should pass away.

RAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL THE

CHAPTER V.

My first object was, to ascertain the fate of my family. From Constantius I could learn nothing; for the severity of his wound had reduced him to such a state, that he recognised no one. I sat by him day after day, watching with bitter solicitude for the return of his senses. He raved continually of his wife, and every other name that I loved. The affecting eloquence of his appeals sometimes plunged me into the deepest depression; sometimes drove me out to seek relief from them even in the horrors of the streets; I was the most solitary of men. In those melancholy wanderings, none spoke to me; I spoke to none. The kinsmen whom I had left under the com-

mand of my brave son, were slain or dispersed; and, on the night when I saw him battling with his native ardour, the men whom he led to the foot of the rampart were an accidental band, excited by his brilliant intrepidity to choose him at the instant for their captain. In sorrow, indeed, had I entered Jerusalem.

The devastation of the city was enormous during its tumults. The great factions were reduced to two; but in the struggle, a large portion of the Temple was burned. The stately chambers of the priests were dust and embers. The cloisters which encircled the sanctuary were beaten down, or left naked to the visitation of the seasons, which now, as by the peculiar wrath of Heaven, had assumed a fierce and ominous inclemency. Tremendous bursts of tempest shook the city; and the popular mind was kept in perpetual alarm at the accidents which followed those storms. Fires were constantly caused by the lightning; deluges of rain flooded the streets, and, falling on the shattered roofs, increased the misery of their famishing inhabitants: the keenest severity of

winter in the midst of spring, added to the sufferings of a people doubly unprovided to encounter it, by its unexpectedness, and by their necessary exposure on the battlements and in the field.

Within the walls, all bore the look of a grave, and even that grave shaken by some convulsion of nature. From the battlements, the sight was despair. The Roman camps covered the hills, and we could see the soldiery sharpening the very lances that were to drink our blood. The fires of their night-watches lighted up the horizon round. At every fire we could see our future slayers. We heard the sound of their trumpets, and their shouts; as the sheep in the fold might hear the roaring of the lion and the tiger ready to leap their feeble boundary.

Yet the valour of the people was never wearied out. The wall, whose circle was to shut us up from the help of man or the hope of escape, was the grand object of attack and defence; and, though thousands covered the ground at its foot with their corpses, the Jew was still ready to rush on the Roman spear.

This valour was spontaneous, for subordination had long been at an end. The names of John of Giscala and Simon, influential as they were in the earlier periods of the war, had lost their force, in the civil fury and desperate pressures of the siege. No leaders were acknowledged, but hatred of the enemy, iron fortitude, and a determination not to survive the fall of Jerusalem.

In this furious warfare, I took my share with the rest; handled the spear, and fought and watched, without thinking of any distinction of rank. My military experience, and the personal strength which enabled me to render prominent services in those desultory attacks, often excited our warriors to offer me command; but ambition was dead within me.

I was one day sitting beside the bed of Constantius, and bitterly absorbed in gazing on what I thought the progress of death; when I heard an universal outcry, more melancholy than human voices seemed made to utter. My first thought was that the enemy had forced the gates. I took down my sword, and gloomily

prepared to go out, and die. I found the streets filled with crowds hurrying forward without apparent direction, but all exhibiting a sorrow amounting to agony; wringing their hands, beating their bosoms, tearing their hair, and casting dust and ashes on their heads. A large body of the priesthood came rushing from the Temple with loud lamentations. The DAILY SACRIFICE had ceased! The perpetual offering, which twice a day burned in testimonial of the sins and the expiation of Israel, the peculiar homage of the nation to Heaven, was no more! The siege had extinguished the resources of the Temple; the victims could no longer be supplied, and the people must perish without the power of atonement. This was the final cutting off—the declaration of the sentence—the seal of the great condemnation.—Jerusalem was undone!

Overpowered by this fatal sign, I was sadly returning to my worse than solitary chamber: for there lay, speechless and powerless, the noblest creature that breathed in Jerusalem: yet a source of perpetual anxiety to me from

his utter helplessness, and the deep affection which I bore him; when I was driven aside by a new torrent of the people, exclaiming—"The prophet! the prophet! woe to the city of David!"

They rushed on in haggard multitudes; and in the midst of them came a mad fellow, bounding and gesticulating with indescribable wildness. His constant exclamation was—"Woe—woe—woe!" expressed in a tone that searched the very heart. He stopped from time to time, and flung out some denunciation against the popular crimes, then recommenced his cry of "Woe!" and bounded forward again.

He at length came opposite to where I stood; and his features struck me as resembling some that I had seen before. But they were full of a strange impulse—the grandeur of inspiration, mingled with the animal fierceness of frenzy. The eye shot fire under the sharp and hollow brows; the nostrils contracted and opened, like those of an angry steed; and every muscle of a singularly elastic frame was quivering and ex-

posed from the effects alike of mental violence and famine.

"Ho! Prince of Naphtali! we meet at last!" was his exclamation: his countenance fell; and a tear gushed from lids that looked incapable of human weakness. "I found her, my beauty, my bride! She was in the dungeon. The seal-ring that I tore from that villain's finger was worth a mine of gold, for it opened the gates of her prison. Come forth, girl!" With these words, he caught by the hand, and led to me a pale creature, with the traces of loveliness, but evidently in the last stage of mortal decay. She stood silent as a statue. In compassion I took her hand, while the multitude gathered round us in curiosity. I now remembered Sabat the Ishmaelite, and his story.

"She is mad," said Sabat, shaking his head mournfully, and gazing on the fading form at his side. "Worlds would not restore her senses. But there is a time for all things." He sighed, and cast his full eye on heaven.

"I watched her day and night," he went on, "till I grew mad too. But the world will have an end, and then all will be well. Come, wife, we must be going. To-night there are strange things within the walls, and without the walls. There will be feasting, and mourning; there will be blood, and tears: then comes the famine—then comes the fire—then the sword; and then all is quiet again, and for ever! But Heaven is mighty. To-night there will be wonders; watch well your walls, people of the ruined city. To-night there will be signs; let no man sleep, but those that sleep in the grave. Prince of Naphtali! have you too sworn, as I have, to die?" He lifted his meagre hand. "Come, ye thunders; come, ye fires: vengeance cries from the sanctuary. Listen! undone people; listen! nation of sorrow, to the trumpets of the ministers of wrath. Woe—woe—woe!"

Pronouncing those words with a voice of the most sonorous, yet melancholy power, he threw himself into a succession of strange and fear-

ful gestures; then beckoning to the female, who submissively followed his steps, plunged away among the multitude. I heard the howl of "Woe—woe—woe!" long echoed through the windings of the ruined streets; and thought that I heard the voice of the angel of desolation.

The seventeenth day of the month Tamuz, ever memorable in the sufferings of Israel, was the last of the Daily Sacrifice. Sorrow and fear were on the city; and the silence of the night was broken by lamentation from the multitude. I retired to my chamber of affliction, and busied myself in preparing for the guard of the temple, to withdraw my mind from the gloom that was beginning to master me. Yet when I looked round the room, and thought of what I had been, of the opulent enjoyments of my palace, and of the beloved faces that surrounded me there, I felt the sickness of the heart.

The chilling air that blew through the dilapidated walls, the cruse of water, the scanty

bread, the glimmering lamp, the comfortless and squalid bed, on which lay, in the last stage of weakness, a patriot and a hero,—being full of fine affections and abilities, reduced to the helplessness of an infant, and whom, in leaving for the night, I might be leaving to perish by the poniard of the robber,—unmanned me. I cast the scimitar from my hand, and sat down with a sullen determination there to linger until death, or that darker vengeance which haunted me, should do its will.

The night was stormy; and the wind rolled in long and bitter gusts through the deserted chambers of the huge mansion. But the mind is the true place of suffering; and I felt the season's visitation in my locks drenched about my face, and my tattered robes swept by the freezing blasts, as only the natural course of things.

I was sitting by the bed-side, moistening the fevered lips of Constantius with water, and pressing on him the last fragment of bread which I might ever have to give, when I, with sudden delight, heard him utter for the first time articulate sounds. I stooped my ear to

catch accents so dear, and full of hope. But the words were a supplication. He prayed to the Christian's God!

I turned away from this resistless conviction of his belief. But this was no time for debate; and I was won to listen again. His voice was scarcely above a whisper, but his language was the aspiration of a glowing heart. His eyes were closed; and evidently unconscious of my presence, in his high communion with Heaven, he talked of things of which I had but imperfect knowledge, or none; of blood shed for the sins of man; of a descended Spirit to guard the path of the servants of Heaven; of the unspeakable love that gave the Son of God to torture and mortal death for the atonement of that human iniquity, which nothing but such a sacrifice could atone. He named the names dear to us both; and praying "for their safety, if they still were in life, or for their meeting beyond the grave, resigned himself to the will of his Lord."

I waited in sacred awe till I saw, by the subsiding motion of the lips, that the inward prayer

which followed, was done; and then, anxious to gain information of my family, questioned him. But, with the prayer, the interval of mental power passed away. The veil was drawn over his senses once more; and his answers were unintelligible.

Yet even the hope of his restoration lightened my gloom; my spirits, naturally elastic, shook off their leaden weight: I took up the scimitar, and pressing the cold hand of my noble fellow-victim, prepared to issue forth to the Temple.

The storm was partially gone; and the moon, approaching to the full, was high in heaven, fighting her way through masses of rapid cloud. The wind still roared in long blasts, as the tempest retired, like an army repulsed, and indignant at being driven from the spoil. But the ground was deluged, and a bitter sleet shot on our half-naked bodies. I had far to pass through the streets of the upper city; and their aspect was deeply suited to the melancholy of the hour.

Vast walls and buttresses of the burned and overthrown mansions remained, that, in the

spectral light, looked like gigantic spectres. Ranges of inferior ruins stretched to the utmost glance; some yet sending up the smoke of recent conflagration, and others beaten down by the storms, or left to decay. The immense buildings of the chieftains, once the scenes of all but kingly magnificence, stood roofless and windowless, with the light sadly gleaming through their fissures, and the wind singing a dirge of ruin through their lifeless halls. I scarcely met a human being; for the sword and famine had fearfully reduced the once countless population.

But I sometimes startled a flight of vultures from their meal; or, in the sinking of the light, stumbled upon a heap that uttered a cry, and showed that life was there; or, from his horrid morsel, a wretch glared upon me, as one wolf might glare upon another that came to rob him of his prey; or the twinkling of a miserable lamp, in the corner of a ruin, glimmered over a knot of felony and murder, reckoning their hideous gains, and carousing and quarrelling with the dagger drawn. Heaps of bones, whitening in the air, were the monuments of the wasted valour of

my countrymen; and the oppressive atmosphere gave the sensation of walking in a sepulchre.

I dragged on my limbs, with increased difficulty, through those long avenues of misery and death; that, black, silent, and split into a thousand shapes of ruin, looked less like the streets of a city, than the rocky defiles of a mountain shattered by lightnings and earthquakes. But we were strong in that dreary strength which man derives from excess of calamity. Mental and bodily suffering seemed to have done their worst. Within the city there was not sustenance for the tenth part of even its reduced population for a week to come: our armouries were exhausted—our bodies naked—our limbs withered by perpetual wounds and watching. I should have welcomed the assault which closed this lamentable struggle against impossibilities.

On the summit of the hill I found a crowd of unhappy beings, who came, like myself, actuated by zeal to defend the Temple from the insults to which its sanctity was now nightly exposed. Faction had long extinguished the native ho-

mage of the people. Battles had been fought within its walls; and many a corpse loaded the sacred floors, that once would have required solemn ceremonies to free them from the pollution of an unlicensed step.

And what a band were assembled there! Wretches mutilated by wounds, worn with sleeplessness, haggard with want of food; shivering together on the declivity, whose naked elevation exposed them to the whole inclemency of the night; flung, like the dead, on the ground, or gathered in little knots among the ruined porticoes, with death in every frame, and despair in every heart.

I was sheltering myself behind the broken columns of the Grand gate, from the bitter wind which searched every fibre; and was sinking into that chilling torpor which benumbs body and mind alike; when a clash of military music, and the tramp of a multitude, assailed my ear. I started up, and found my miserable companions mustering from the various hollows of the hill to our post on the central ground of Mount Moriah, where the view was boundless on every

side. A growing blaze rose up from the valley, and flashed upon the wall of circumvallation. The sounds of cymbal and trumpet swelled : the blaze advanced rapidly; and going the circuit of the wall, the helmets and lances of cavalry were seen glittering through the gloom; a crowd of archers preceded a dense body of the legionary horse, at whose head rode the Roman general and his chief officers. On this night the fatal wall had been completed, and Titus was going its round in triumph. Every horseman carried a torch; and strong divisions of infantry followed, bearing lamps and vessels of combustible matter on the points of their spears. As the whole moved, rolling and bending with the inequalities of the ground, I thought that I saw a mighty serpent coiling his burning spires round the prey that was never to be rescued by the power of man.

But the pomp of war below, and the wretchedness around, raised reflections of such bitterness, that, when Titus and his splendid troop reached the foot of the Temple-hill, one outcry of sorrow and anticipated ruin burst from us all.

The conqueror heard it, and, from the instant manœuvring of his troops, was evidently alarmed: he had known the courage of the Jews too long, not to dread the effects of their despair.

And despair it was, fierce and untameable! I started forward, exclaiming, "If there is a man among you ready to stake his life for his country, let him follow me."

To the last hour the Jew was a warrior. The crowd grasped their spears, and we sprang down the cliffs. As we reached the outer wall of the city, I restrained their exhaustless spirit, until I had singly ascertained the state of the enemy. Titus was passing the well-known ravine near the Fountain-gate, where the ground was difficult for cavalry, from its being chiefly divided into gardens. I threw open the gate, and led the way to the circumvallation. The centinels, occupied with looking on the pomp, suffered us to approach unperceived; we mounted the wall, overthrew every thing before us, and plunged down upon the cavalry entangled in the ravine.

The bravery of the legions was not proof

against the fury of our attack. Even our wild faces and naked forms, seen by the uncertain glare of the torches, looked scarcely human. Horse and man were rolled down the declivity: the arrival of fresh troops only increased the confusion; their torches made them a mark for our pikes and arrows; every point told; and every Roman that fell, armed a Jew. The conflict became murderous: and we stabbed at our ease the troopers of the Emperor's guard, through their mail, while their long lances were useless.

The defile gave us incalculable advantages; for the garden-walls were impassable by the cavalry, while we bounded over them like deer. All was uproar, terror, and rage. We actually waded through blood. At every step I trod on horse or man; helmets and bucklers, lances and armour, lay in heaps: the stream of the ravine soon ran purple with the proudest gore of the proud legions.

At length, while we were absolutely oppressed with the multitude of dead, a sudden blast of trumpets, and the loud shouts of the

enemy, led me to prepare for a still fiercer effort. A tide of cavalry poured over the ground; a gallant figure, cheering them on, with his helmet in his hand, galloped in their front; I withdrew my wearied followers from the exposed situation into which their success had led them, and, posting them behind a rampart of Roman dead, awaited the charge.

It came with the force of thunder; the powerful horses of the imperial escort broke over our rampart at the first shock, and bore us down like stubble. Every man of us was under their feet in a moment; yet the very number of our assailants saved us: the narrowness of the place gave no room for the management of the horse; the darkness assisted both our escape and assault; and, even lying on the ground, we plunged our knives in horse and rider with terrible retaliation.

The cavalry at length gave way; but the Roman general, a man of the heroic spirit that is only inflamed by repulse, rushed forward among the disheartened troops, and roused them, by his cries and gestures, to retrieve their honour.

After a few bold words, he charged at their head. I singled him out, as I saw his golden eagle gleam in the torch-light. To capture the son of Vespasian would have been a triumph worth a hundred lives. Titus was celebrated for personal dexterity in the management of the horse and lance; and I could not restrain my admiration of the skill with which he penetrated the difficulties of the field, and the mastery with which he repelled or overthrew all that opposed him.

Our motley ranks were already scattering; when I called out my name, and defied him to the combat. He stooped over his charger's neck to discover his adversary; and, seeing before him a being as blackened and beggared as the most dismantled figure of the crowd, gave a laugh of fierce derision, and was turning away, when our roar of scorn recalled him. He struck in the spur, and, couching his lance, he bounded towards me. To have waited his attack must have been destruction; I sprang aside, and with my full vigour flung the javelin: it went through his buckler. He reeled;

and a groan rose from the legionaries, who were rushing forwards to his support: he stopped them with a fierce gesture, and, casting off the entangled buckler, charged again. But the hope of the imperial diadem was not to be thus cheaply hazarded. The whole circle of cavalry rolled in upon us; I was dragged down by a hundred hands; and Titus was forced away, indignant at the zeal which thwarted his fiery valour.

In the confusion I was forgotten, slipped through the concourse, and rejoined my countrymen, who had given me over for lost, and now received me with shouts of victory. The universal cry was to advance; but I felt that the limit of triumph for that night was come: the engagement had become known to the whole range of the enemy's camps, and troops without number were already pouring down. I ordered a retreat; but there was one remaining exploit to make the night's service memorable.

Leaving a few hundred pikemen outside the circumvallation to keep off any sudden attempt, I set every hand at work to gather the dry

weeds, rushes, and fragments of trees, from the low grounds into a pile. It was laid against the rampart. I flung the first torch, and pile and rampart were soon alike in a blaze. Volumes of flame, carried by the wind, rolled round its entire circuit.

The Romans rushed down in multitudes to extinguish the fire. But this became continually more difficult. Jerusalem had been roused from its sleep; and the extravagant rumours that a great victory was obtained, Titus slain, and the enemy's camp taken by storm, stimulated the natural spirit of the people to the most boundless confidence. Every Jew who could find a lance, an arrow, or a knife, hurried to the gates ; and the space between the walls and the circumvallation was crowded with an army, which, in that crisis of superhuman exultation, perhaps no disciplined force on earth could have outfought.

Nothing could now save the rampart. Torches innumerable, piles of fagots, arms, even the dead, all things that could burn, were flung upon it. Thousands who, at other times, might have shrunk, forgot the name of fear, leaped

into the very midst of the flames, and, tearing up the blazing timbers, dug to the heart of the rampart, and filled the hollows with sulphur and bitumen; or struggled their way across the tumbling ruins, to throw themselves among the Roman spearmen, and see the blood of an enemy before they died.

War never had a bolder moment. Human nature, roused to the wildest height of enthusiasm, was lavishing life like dust. The rampart spread a horrid light upon the havock: every spot of the battle, every group of the furious living and the trampled and deformed dead, was keenly visible. The ear was deafened by the incessant roar of flame, the falling of the huge heaps of the rampart, and the agonies and exultations of men revelling in mutual slaughter.

In that hour came one of those solemn signs that marked the downfall of Jerusalem.

The tempest, that had blown at intervals with tremendous violence, died away at once; and a surge of light ascended from the horizon, and rolled up rapidly to the zenith. The phenome-

non instantly fixed every eye. There was an indefinable sense in the general mind that a sign of power and Providence was about to be given. The battle ceased; the outcries were followed by utter silence; the armed ranks stood still, in the very act of rushing on each other: all faces were turned on the heavens.

The light rose pale and quivering, like the meteors of a summer evening. But in the zenith it spread and swelled into a splendour, that distinguished it irresistibly from the wonders of earth or air. It swiftly eclipsed every star. The moon vanished before it; the canopy of the sky seemed to be dissolved, for a view into a bright and infinite region beyond, fit for the career of those mighty beings to whom man is but a feather on the gale.

As we gazed, this boundless field was transformed into a field of battle; multitudes poured across it in the fiercest convulsions of combat; horsemen charged, and died under their horses' feet; armour and standards were trampled in blood; column and line burst through each

other. At length the battle stooped towards the earth; and, with hearts beating with indescribable feelings, we recognised in the fight the banners of the tribes. It was Jew and Roman struggling for life; the very countenances of the combatants became visible, and each man below saw a representative of himself and his fortunes above. The fate of Jewish war was there written by the hand of Heaven; the fate of the individual was there predicted in the individual triumph or fall. What thought of man can conceive the intense interest with which we watched every blow, every movement, every wound of those images of ourselves?

The light illumined the whole horizon below. The legions were seen drawn out in front of the camps ready for action; every helmet and spear-point glittering in the radiance; every face turned up, gazing in awe and terror on the sky. The tents spreading over the hills; the thousands and tens of thousands of auxiliaries and captives; the little groups of the peasantry roused from sleep by the uproar of the night,

and gathered upon the knolls and eminences of their fields; all were bathed in a flood of preternatural lustre.

But the wondrous battle approached its close. The visionary Romans shook; column and cohort gave way, and the banners of the tribes waved in victory over the field. Then first, human voices dared to be heard. From the city and the plain burst forth one mighty shout of triumph.

But our presumption was to be soon checked. A peal of thunder that made the very ground tremble under our feet, rolled from the four quarters of the heaven. The conquering host shook, broke, and fled in utter confusion over the sapphire field. It was pursued; but by no semblance of the Roman. An awful enemy was on its steps. Flashes of forked fire, like myriads of lances, darted after it; cloud on cloud deepened down, as the smoke of a mighty furnace; globes of light shot blasting and burning along its track. Then, amid the doubled roar of thunder, rushed forth the chivalry of Heaven; shapes of transcendent beauty, yet with

looks of wrath that withered the human eye; armed sons of immortality descending on the wing by millions; mingled with shapes and instruments of ruin, for which the mind has no conception. The circle of the heaven was filled with the chariots and horses of fire. Flight was in vain: the weapons were seen to drop from the Jewish host: their warriors sank upon the splendid field. Still the immortal armies poured on, trampling and blasting, until the last of the routed was consumed.

The angry pomp then paused. Countless wings were spread, and the angelic multitudes, having done the work of vengeance, rushed upward with the sound of ocean in the storm. The roar of trumpets and thunders was heard, until the splendour was lost in the heights of the empyrean.

We felt the terrible warning. Our strength was dried up at the sight; despair seized upon our souls. We had now seen the fate of Jerusalem. No victory over man could save us from the coming of final ruin. Thousands never left the ground on which they stood; they perished

by their own hands, or lay down and died of broken hearts. The rest fled through the night, that again wrapped them in tenfold darkness. The whole multitude scattered away, with soundless steps and in silence, like an army of spectres.

CHAPTER VI.

In the deepest dejection that could overwhelm the human mind I returned to the city, where one melancholy care still bound me to existence. I hastened to my comfortless home; but the battle had fluctuated so far round the walls, that I found myself perplexed among the ruins of a portion of the lower city, a crowd of obscure streets which belonged almost wholly to strangers and the poorer population.

The faction of John of Giscala, composed chiefly of the more profligate and beggared class, had made the lower city their stronghold, before they became masters of Mount Moriah; and some desperate skirmishes, of which con-

flagrations were the perpetual consequence, laid waste the principal part of a district built and kept up with the haste and carelessness of poverty. To find a guide through this scene of dilapidation was hopeless, for every living creature, terrified by the awful portents of the sky, had now fled from the streets. The night was solid darkness. No expiring gleam from the burnt rampart, no fires of the Roman camps, no lamp on the Jewish battlements, broke the pitchy blackness. Life and light seemed to have perished together.

To proceed soon became impossible; and I had no other resource than to wait the coming of day. But to one accustomed as I was to hardships, this inconvenience was trivial. I felt my way along the walls to the entrance of a house that promised some protection from the night, and flinging myself into a corner, vainly tried to slumber. But the rising of the storm, and the rain pouring upon my lair, drove me to seek a more sheltered spot within the ruin. The destruction was so effectual, that this was difficult to discover, and I was hopelessly returning

to take my chance in the open air, when I observed the glimmer of a lamp through a crevice in the upper part of the building. My first impulse was to approach and obtain assistance. But the abruptness of the ascent gave me time to consider the hazard of breaking in upon such groups as might be gathered at that hour, in a period when every atrocity under Heaven reigned in Jerusalem.

My patience was put to but brief trial; for, in a few minutes, I heard a low hymn. It paused, as if followed by prayer. The hymn began again, in accents so faint, as evidently to express the fear of the worshippers. But the sounds thrilled through my soul. I listened in a struggle of doubt and hope. Could I be deceived? and, if I were, how bitter must be the discovery! I sat down on the foot of the rude stair, to feed myself with the fancied delight, before it should be snatched from me for ever.

But my perturbation would have risen to madness, had I stopped longer. I climbed up the tottering steps; half-way I found myself obstructed by a door; I struck upon it, and called

aloud. After an interval of miserable delay, a still higher door was opened, and a figure, disguised in a mantle, tremblingly looked out, and demanded my purpose. I saw glancing over her two faces, that I would have given the world to see. I called out "Miriam!" Overpowered with emotion, my speech failed me. I lived only in my eyes. I saw Miriam fling off the mantle with a scream of joy, and rush down the steps. I saw my two daughters follow her with the speed of love; the door was thrown back, and I fell fainting into their arms.

Tears, exclamations, and gazings, were long our only language. My wife flung her arms round me, and hung over my wasted frame with endless embraces and sobs of joy. My daughters fell at my feet, bathed my cold hands with their tears, smiled on me in speechless delight, and then wept again. They had thought me lost to them for ever. I had thought them dead, or driven to some solitude which forbade us to meet again on this side of the grave. For two years, two dreadful years, a lonely man on

earth, a wifeless husband, a childless father, tried by every misery of mind and body; here, here I found my treasure once more. On this spot, wretched and destitute as it was, in the midst of public misery and personal woe, I had found those whose loss would have made the riches of mankind beggary to me. My soul overflowed. Words were not to tell the feverish fondness, the strong delight that quivered through me; I wept with woman's weakness; I held my wife and children at arm's length, that I might enjoy the full happiness of gazing on them; then my eyes would grow dim; and I caught them to my heart, and in silence, the silence of unspeakable emotion, tried to collect my thoughts, and convince myself that my joy was no dream.

The night passed in mutual inquiries. The career of my family had been deeply diversified. On my capture in the great battle with Cestius, in which it was conceived that I had fallen, they were on the point of coming to Jerusalem to ascertain their misfortune. The advance of

the Romans to Masada precluded this. They sailed for Alexandria, and were overtaken by a storm.

"In that storm," said Miriam, with terror painted on her countenance, "we saw a sight that appalled the firmest heart among us, and to this hour recalls horrid images. The night had fallen intensely dark. Our vessel, labouring through the tempest during the day, and greatly shattered, was expected to go down before morn, and I had come upon the deck prepared to submit to the general fate; when I saw a flame upon the horizon. I pointed it out to the mariners; but they were paralyzed by weariness and fear; and instead of approaching what I conceived to be a beacon, they let the vessel drive before the wind. I watched the light; to my astonishment I saw it advancing over the waves. It was a large ship on fire, and rushing down upon us. Then indeed there was no insensibility in our mariners; they were like madmen through excess of fear; they did every thing but make a resolute effort to escape the danger.

"The blazing ship came towards us with terrific rapidity. As it approached, the figure of a man was seen on the deck, standing unhurt in the midst of the burning. The Syrian pilot, hitherto the boldest of our crew, at this sight, cast the helm from his hands in despair, and tore his beard, exclaiming, that we were undone. To our questions he would give no other answer than pointing to the solitary being who stood calmly in the centre of conflagration, more like a demon than a man.

"I proposed that we should make some effort to rescue this unfortunate man. But the pilot was horror-struck at the thought, and then gave up the tale, that it cost him agonies even to utter. He told us that the being whom our frantic compassion would attempt to save, was an accursed thing; that for some crime too inexpiable to allow of his remaining among creatures capable of hope, he was cast out from men, stricken into the nature of the condemned spirits, and sentenced to rove the ocean in fire, ever burning, and never consumed!"

I felt every word, as if that fire were devour-

ing my flesh. The sense of what I was, and what I must be, was poison. My head swam; mortal pain overwhelmed me. And this abhorred thing I was; this sentenced and fearful wretch I was, covered with wrath and shame, the exile from human nature: and I heard my sentence pronounced, and my existence declared hideous, by the lips on which I hung for confidence and consolation against the world.

Flinging my mantle over my face to hide its writhings, I seemed to listen; but my ears refused to hear. In my perturbation, I once thought of boldly avowing the truth, and thus freeing myself from the pang of perpetual concealment. But the offence and the retribution were too real and too deadly, to be disclosed, without destroying the last chance of happiness to those innocent sufferers. I mastered the convulsion, and again bent my ear.

"Our story exhausts you," said Miriam; "but it is done. After a long pursuit, in which the burning ship followed us, as if with the express purpose of our ruin; we were snatched from a death by fire, only to undergo the chance

of one by the waves; for we struck upon a rock. Yet it may have been owing even to that chase that we were saved. The ship had driven us towards land. At sea we must have perished; but the shore was found to be so near, that the country people, guided by the flame, saved us without the loss of a life. Once on shore, we met with some of the fugitives from Masada, who brought us to Jerusalem, the only remaining refuge for our unhappy nation."

To prevent a recurrence of this torturing subject, I mastered my emotion so far as to ask some question of their means of support during the siege. But Miriam's thoughts were still busy with the sea. After some hesitation, and as if she dreaded the answer, she said; "One extraordinary circumstance made me take a strong interest in the fate of that solitary being on board the burning vessel. It once seemed to have the most striking likeness to you. I even cried out to it under that impression; but fortunate it was for us all that my heedless cry was not answered; for, when it approached us, I could see its countenance change: it threw a

sheet of flame across our vessel that almost scorched us to death; and then, perhaps thinking that our destruction was complete, the human fiend ascended from the waters in a pillar of intense fire."

I felt deep pain in this romantic narrative. My mysterious sentence was the common talk of mankind! My frightful secret, that I had thought locked up in my own heart, was loose as the air! This was enough to make life bitter. But, to be identified in the minds of my family with the object of universal horror, was a chance which I determined not to contemplate. My secret there was still safe; and my resolution became fixed, never to destroy that safety by any frantic confidence of my own.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE, with my head bent on my knees, I hung in the misery of self-abhorrence; I heard the name of Constantius sorrowfully pronounced beside me. The state in which he must be left by my long absence flashed upon my mind; I threw back the mantle, and saw Salome. It was her voice that wept; and I then first observed the work of woe in her form and features. She was almost a shadow; her eye was lustreless, and the hands that she clasped in silent prayer were reduced to the bone. But before I could speak, Miriam made a sign of silence to me, and led the mourner away; then returning, said, "I dreaded lest you might make any inquiries

before Salome for her husband. Religion alone has kept her from the grave. On our arrival here we found our noble Constantius worn out by the fatigue of the time; but he was our guardian spirit in the dreadful tumults of the city. When we were burned out of one asylum, he led us to another. It is but a week since he placed us in this melancholy spot, but yet the more secure and unknown. He himself brought us provisions, supplied us with every comfort that could be obtained by his impoverished means, and saved us from want. But now,"—the tears gushed from her eyes, and she could not proceed.

"Yes—now," said I, "he is a sight that would shock the eye: we must keep Salome in ignorance, as long as we can."

"The unhappy girl knows his fate but too well. He left us a few days since, to obtain some intelligence of the siege. We sat during the night, listening to the frightful sounds of battle. At day-break, unable any longer to bear the suspense, or sit looking at Salome's wretchedness, I ventured to the Fountain-gate, and

there heard what I so bitterly anticipated—our brave Constantius was slain!"

She wept aloud; and sobs and cries of irrepressible anguish answered her from the chamber of my unhappy child.

The danger of a too sudden discovery prevented me from drying those tears; and I could proceed only by offering conjectures on the various chances of battle, the possibility of his being made prisoner, and the general difficulty of ascertaining the fates of men in the irregular combats of a populace. But Salome sat fixed in cold incredulity. Esther sorrowfully kissed my hand for the disposition to give them a ray of comfort; Miriam gazed on me with a sad and searching look, as if she felt that I would not tamper with their distresses, yet was deeply perplexed for the issue.

At last the delay grew painful to myself; and taking Salome to my arms, and pressing a kiss of parental love on her pale cheek, I whispered, "he lives."

I was overwhelmed with transports and thanksgivings. Precaution was at an end. If

battle were raging in the streets, I could not now have restrained the generous impatience of friendship and love. We left the tower. There was not much to leave, besides the walls; but such as it was, the first fugitive was welcome to the possession. Night was still within the building, which had belonged to some of the Roman officers of state, and was massive and of great extent. But at the threshold, the grey dawn came quivering over the Mount of Olives.

We struggled through the long and winding streets, which even in the fight were nearly impassable. From the inhabitants we met with no impediment; a few haggard and fierce-looking men stared at us from the ruins; but we, wrapt up in rude mantles, and hurrying along, wore too much the livery of despair, to be disturbed by our fellows in wretchedness.

With a trembling heart I led the way to the chamber, where lay one, in whose life our general happiness was centred. Fearful of the shock which our sudden appearance might give his enfeebled frame, and not less of the misery

with which he must be seen, I advanced alone to the bed-side. He gave no sign of recognition, though he was evidently awake; and I was about to close the curtains, and keep at least Salome from the hazardous sight of this living ruin, when I found her beside me. She took his hand, and sat down on the bed with her eyes fixed on his hollow features. She spoke not a word, but sat cherishing the wasted hand in her own, and kissing it with sad fondness. Her grief was too sacred for our interference; and in sorrow scarcely less poignant than her own, I led apart Miriam and Esther, who, like me, believed that the parting day was come.

Such rude help as could be found in medicine, —at a time when our men of science had fled the city, and a few herbs were the only resource,—had not been neglected even in my distraction. But life seemed retiring hour by hour; and if I dared to contemplate the death of this heroic and beloved being, it was almost with a wish that it had happened before the arrival of those to whom it must be a renewal of agony.

But the minor cares, which make so humble, yet so necessary a page in the history of life, were now to occupy me. Food must be provided for the increased number of my inmates; and where was that to be found in the circle of a beleaguered city? Money was useless, even if I possessed it: the friends who would once have shared their last meal with me were exiled or slain; and it was in the midst of a fierce populace, themselves dying of hunger, that I was to glean the daily subsistence of my wife and children. The natural pride of the chieftain revolted at the idea of supplicating for food; but this was one of the questions that show the absurdity of pride; and I must beg, if I would not see them die. The dwelling had belonged to one of the noble families extinguished or driven out in the first commotions of the war. The factions which perpetually tore each other, and fought from house to house, had stripped its lofty halls of every thing that could be plundered in the hurry of civil feud; and when I took refuge under its roof, it looked the very palace of desolation. But it was a shelter;

undisturbed by the riots of the crowd, too bare to invite the robber; and even its vast and naked chambers, its gloomy passages, and frowning casements, were congenial to the mood of my mind. With Constantius insensible and dying before me, and with my own spirit darkened by an eternal cloud, I loved the loneliness and darkness. When the echo of the winds came round me, as I sat during my miserable midnights watching the countenance of my son, and moistening his feverish lip with the water, that even then was becoming a commodity of rare price in Jerusalem; I communed with memories that I would not have exchanged for the brightest enjoyments of life. I welcomed the sad music, in which the beloved voices revisited my soul; what was earth now to me, but a tomb! pomp, nay comfort, would have been a mockery. I clung to the solitude and obscurity that gave me the picture of the grave.

But the presence of my family made me feel the wretchedness of my abode. And when I cast my eyes round the squalid and chilling halls, and saw wandering through them those

gentle and delicate forms, and saw them trying to disguise by smiles and cheering words the depression that the whole scene must inspire, I felt a pang that might defy a firmer philosophy than mine.

"Here," said I to Miriam, as I hastened to the door, "I leave you mistress of a palace. The Asmonean blood once flourished within these walls; and why not we? I have seen the nobles of the land crowded into these chambers; and every spot of them echoing with festivity. They are not so full now; but we must make the most of what we have. Those hangings, that I remember the pride of the Sidonian who sold them, and the wonder of Jerusalem, are left to us still; if they are in fragments, they will but show our handy-work the more. We must make our own music; and, in default of menials, serve with our own hands. The pile in that corner was once a throne sent by a Persian king to the descendant of the Maccabees; it will serve us at least for firing: the walls are thick; the roof may hold out a few storms more; the casements, if they keep out

nothing else, keep out the day-light, an unwelcome guest, which would do any thing but reconcile us to the state of the mansion: and now, farewell for a few hours."

Miriam caught my arm, and said in that sweet tone, which always sank into my heart; "Salathiel, you must not leave us in this temper. I would rather hear your open complaints of fortune, than this affectation of scorn for our calamities. They are many, and painful, I allow; though I will not—dare not repine. They may even be such as are beyond human cure. But who shall say, that he has deserved better; or if he has, that suffering may not be the determined means of purifying and exalting his nature? Is gold the only thing that is to be tried in the fire?"

She waited my answer, with a look of dejected love.

"Miriam, I need not say that I respect and honour your feelings. But no resignation can combat the substantial evils of life. Will the finest sentiments that ever came from human lips make this darkness light, turn this bitter

wind into warmth, or make these hideous chambers but the dungeon?

"Salathiel, I dread this language;" was the answer, with more than usual solemnity. "It is, must I say it, even ungrateful and unwise: shall the creatures of the Power by whom we are placed in life, either defy his wrath, or disregard his mercy? Might we not be more severely tasked than we are? Are there not thousands at this hour in the world, who, with at least equal claims to the divine benevolence, (I tremble when I use the presumptuous phrase,) are undergoing calamities, to which ours are happiness? Look from this very threshold: are there not thousands within the walls of Jerusalem groaning in the pangs of unhealed wounds, mad, starving, stripped of every succour of man, dying in hovels, the last survivors of their wretched race; and yet we, still enjoying health, with a roof over our heads, with our children round us safe, when the plague of the first-born has fallen upon almost every house in Judea, can complain! Be comforted, my love; I see but one actual calamity among us; and,

if Constantius should survive, even that one would be at an end."

I tried to escape under cover of ridicule.

"So, let fancy have its way; and never had it a more boundless field. Let us dream this ruin into our palace, fill its walls with imaginary opulence, and be happy in spite of chance or change. Here will I sit," said I, throwing myself on the remnant of an embroidered couch; "enjoy the delights of society in solitude, and feel every comfort of life in cold, squalidness, and privation." Miriam turned away with a vexed look; but soon, recovering her composure, came back to conquer with her irresistible smile.

"I can forgive your unhappiness: the spirit of man is not made to endure with the patience of woman. But, thoughts like yours are nurtured into sadness by inactivity: you must leave us for a while, and see how far our skill may not improve even this dwelling. Go into the streets, and bring us intelligence of what the Romans are doing. Try the effect of sun-shine and air; and then return, and allow

the wonders that can be done even by helpless woman."

I obeyed the orders of my gentle despot, and hurried through the echoing halls of this palace of the winds. As I approached the great avenues leading from the gates to the Temple, unusual sounds struck my ears. Hitherto, nothing in the sadness of the besieged city was sadder than its silence. Death was lord of Jerusalem; and the numberless ways in which life was extinguished, had left but the remnant of its once proud and flourishing population.

But now, shouts, and still more the deep and perpetual murmur that bespeaks the movements and gatherings of a crowded city, astonished me. My first conception was, that the enemy had advanced in force; and I was turning towards the battlements to witness or repel the general fate, when I was involved in the multitude whose voices had perplexed me.

It was the season of the passover; the Roman barrier had hitherto kept back the tribes: but the victory that left it in embers, opened the gates; and we once more saw the sons of Judea filling the courts of the city of cities.

CHAPTER VIII.

Nothing could be more unrestrained than the public rejoicing. The bold myriads that poured in hour by hour, many of them long acquainted with Roman battle, and distinguished for the successful defence of their strongholds; many of them even bearing arms taken from the enemy, or displaying honourable scars, seemed to have come, sent by Heaven. The enemy evidently disheartened by their late losses, and the destruction of the rampart which had cost them so much labour, were collected in their camps; and access was free from every quarter. The rumours of our triumph had spread with singular rapidity through the land;

and even the fearful phenomenon that wrote our undoing in the skies, stimulated the national hope. No son of Abraham could believe, without the strongest repugnance, that Heaven had interposed, and yet, interposed against the chosen people.

A living torrent came swelling into the gates; and the great avenues and public places were quickly impassable with the multitude. Jerusalem never before contained such a mass of population. Wherever the eye turned were tents, fires, and feasting: still, the multitude wore an aspect not such as in former days. The war had made its impression on the inmost spirit of our country. The shepherds and tillers of the ground had been forced into the habits of soldiership; and I saw before me, for the gentle and joyous inhabitants of the field and garden, bands of warriors, made fierce by the sullen necessities of the time.

The ruin in which they found Jerusalem, increased their gloom. Groups were seen every where climbing among the fallen buildings to find out the dwelling of some chief of their

tribe, and venting furious indignation on the hands that had overthrown it. The work of war upon the famous defences of the city was a profanation in their eyes. Crowds rushed through the plain to trace the spot where their kindred fell, and gather their bones to the tardy sepulchre. Others were exulting over the wrecks of the Roman, and burning them in heaps, that they might not mix with the honoured dead. But it was the dilapidation of the Temple that struck them with the deepest wrath. The whole nervous sensibility and native reverence of the Jew were awakened by the sight of the humiliated sanctuary. They knelt and kissed the pavements stained with the marks of civil feud. They sent forth deep lamentations for the dismantled beauty of gate and altar. They wrapped their mantles round their heads, and, covering themselves with dust and ashes, chanted hymns of funereal sorrow over the ruins. Hundreds lay embracing pillar and threshold, as they would the corpse of a parent or a child; or, starting from the ground, gathered on the heights nearest to the enemy,

and poured out curses upon the abomination of desolation—the idolatrous banner that flaunted over the Roman camps, and by its mere presence insulted and polluted the Temple of their fathers.

In the midst of this sorrow, and never was there more real sorrow, was the strange contrast of a violent spirit of festivity. The passover, the grand celebration of our law, was till now marked by a grave homage. Even its recollections of triumphant deliverance and illustrious promise were but slightly suffered to mitigate the general awe. But the character of the Jew had undergone a signal change. Desperate valour and haughty contempt of all power but that of arms, were the impulse of the time. The habits of the camp were transferred through every part of life; and the reckless joy of the soldier when the battle is done, the eagerness for immediate indulgence, and the rude and unhallowed resources to while away the heavy hour of idleness, were powerfully and repulsively prominent in the final coming-up of the nation.

As I struggled through the avenues in search of the remnant of my tribe, my ears were perpetually startled by sounds of riot; I saw, beside the spot where relations were weeping over their dead, crowds drinking, dancing, and clamouring. Songs of wild exultation over the enemy, were mingled with laments for their country; wine flowed; and the board, loaded with careless profusion, was surrounded by revellers, with whom the carouse was often succeeded by the quarrel.

The pharisee and scribe, the pests of society, were as busy as ever, bustling through the concourse with supercilious dignity, canvassing for hearers in the market-places as of old, offering their wordy devotions where they might best be seen, and quarrelling, with the native bitterness of religious faction. Blind guides of the blind; vipers and hypocrites; I think that I see them still with their turbans pulled down upon their scowling brows; their mantles gathered round them, that they might not be degraded by a profane touch; and every feature of their acrid and worldly physiognomies wrinkled with pride

put to the torture by the assumption of humility.

Minstrels, far unlike those who once led the way with sacred song to the gates of the holy city, flocked round the tents; and companies of Greek and Syrian mimes, dancers, and flute-players, the natural and fatal growth of a period of military relaxation, were erecting their pavilions, as in the festivals of their own profligate cities.

Deepening the shadows of this fearful profanation, stood forth the progeny of terror; the exorcist, the soothsayer, the magician girdled with live serpents, the pretended prophet naked and pouring out furious rhapsodies; impostors of every colour and trade; yet, some of those abhorred and frightful beings the dupes of their own imposture; some utterly frenzied; and some declaring and doing wonders, that showed a power of evil never learned from man.

In depression of heart I gave up the effort to urge my way through scenes, that, firm as I was, terrified me; and turned towards my home, through the steep path that passed along

the outer Court of the Temple. There all was the mournful silence suited to the Sanctuary, that was to see its altars kindled no more. But the ruins were crowded with kneeling and woe-begone worshippers, that, from morning till night, clung to the sacred soil, and wept for the departing majesty of Judah. I knelt with them, and mingled my tears with theirs.

Prayer calmed my spirit; and before I left the height, I stopped to look again upon the wondrous expanse below. The clear atmosphere of the East singularly diminishes distance, and I seemed to stand close to the Roman camps. The valley at my feet was living with the new population of Jerusalem clustering thick as bees, and sending up the perpetual hum of their mighty hive. The sight was superb; and I involuntarily exulted in the strength that my country was still able to display in the face of her enemies.

"Here were the elements of mutual havock; but, might they not be the elements of preservation?"—The thought occurred, that now was the time to make an effort for peace. "We

had by the repulse of the legionaries shown the price which they must pay for conquest. Even since that repulse, a new force had started forward, armed with an enthusiasm, that would perish only with the last man, and tenfold increasing the difficulties of the conquest."

I turned again to the ruins, where I joined myself to some venerable and influential men, who alike shuddered at the excesses of the crowd below, and the catastrophe that prolonged war must bring. My advice produced an impression. The remnant of the Sanhedrim were speedily collected; and my proposal was adopted, that a deputation should immediately be sent to Titus, to ascertain how far he was disposed to an armistice. The regular pacification might then follow with a more solemn ceremonial.

From the top of Mount Moriah we anxiously watched the passage of our envoys through the multitude that wandered over the space from Jerusalem to the foot of the enemy's position. We saw them pass unmolested, and enter the Roman lines; and from the group of officers

of rank who came forward to meet them, we gladly conjectured that their reception was favourable. Within an hour we saw them moving down the side of the hill on their return; and at some distance behind, a cluster of horsemen slowly advancing.

The deputation had executed its task with success. It was received by Titus with Italian urbanity. To its representations of the power subsisting in Judea to sustain the war, he fully assented; and, giving high praise to the fortitude of the people, only lamented the necessary havock of war. To give the stronger proof of his wish for peace, his answer was to be conveyed formally by a mission of his chief councillors and officers to the Sanhedrim.

The tidings were soon propagated among the people; and proud of their strength, and irritated against the invader as they were, the prospect of relief from their innumerable privations was welcomed with undisguised joy. The hope was as cheering to the two prominent leaders of the factions, as to any man among us. John of Giscala had been stimulated

into daring by circumstances alone; nature never intended him for a warrior. Wily, grasping, and selfish, cruel without boldness, and keen without intellectual vigour; his only purpose was to accumulate money, and to enjoy power. The loftier objects of public life were beyond his narrow capacity. He had been rapidly losing even his own meaner objects: his followers were deserting him; and a continuance of the war involved equally the personal peril which he feared, and the fall of that tottering authority, whose loss would leave him to insulted justice.

Simon, the son of Gioras, was altogether of a higher class of mankind. He was by nature a soldier; and might have, in other times, risen to a place among the celebrated names of war. But the fierceness of the period inflamed his bold spirit into savage atrocity. In the tumults of the city he had distinguished himself by that unhesitating hardihood, which values neither its own life nor that of others; and his boldness threw the hollow and artificial character of his rival deeply into the shade. But he found a different adversary in the Romans. His brute

bravery was met by intelligent valour; his rashness was punished by the discipline of the legions; and, weary of conflicts in which he was sure to be defeated, he had long left the field to the irregular sallies of the tribes; and contented himself with prowess in city feud, and the preservation of his authority against the dagger.

Peace with Rome would have relieved both John and Simon from the danger, which threatened to overwhelm them alike: to the citizens it would have given an instant change from the terrors of assault to tranquillity: to the nation, the hope of an existence made splendidly secure and honourable, by its having been won from the sovereign of the world.

CHAPTER IX.

The movement of the Roman mission through the plain was marked by loud shouts. As it approached the gates, our little Council descended from the Temple-porch to meet it, where one of the open places in the centre of the city was appointed for the conference. The applauding roar of the people followed the troop through the streets; and when the tribunes and senators entered the square, and gave us the right hand of amity, the universal acclamation shook the air. A gleam of joy revisited my heart; and I was on the point of ascending an elevation in the centre, to announce the terms of this fortunate armistice;—to my astonishment I saw the spot pre-occupied.

Whence came the intruder, no one could tell. But there he stood, a figure that fixed the universal eye. He was of lofty stature, brown as an Indian, and thin as one worn to the last extremity by sorrow or famine. Conjecture was busy. He seemed, alternately,—the fugitive from a dungeon,—one of the half-savage recluses that sometimes came from their dens in the wilderness, to exhibit among us the last humiliation of mind and body,—a dealer in forbidden arts, attempting to impose on the rude credulity of the populace,—and a prophet, armed with the fearful knowledge of our approaching fall. But to me there was an expression in his countenance that partook of all: yet I gazed with an indefinable feeling, that there was a something different from all in the glaring eye, the fixed and livid scorn of the lip, and the stern and grand outline of features, that appeared alike overflowing with malignity and majesty.

No man thought of interrupting him. A powerful interest hushed every voice of the multitude; and the only impulse was eagerness

to hear the lofty wisdom, or the fatal tidings, that must be deposited with such a being. He himself seemed to be overwhelmed with the magnitude of the thoughts that he was commissioned to disclose. He stood for a while with the look of one oppressed by a fearful dream; his bosom heaving, his teeth gnashing, every muscle of his meagre frame swelling and quivering. He strongly clasped his bony arms across his breast, as if to repress the agitation that impeded his words; then, stamping on the ground, in wrath at the faculties which thus sank under him at the important moment, the tempest of his soul broke forth.

"Judah! thou wert as a lion—thou wert as the king of the forest when he went up to the mountains to slay, and from the mountains came down to devour. Thou wert as the garden of Eden, every precious stone was thy covering; the sardine, the topaz, and the beryl were thy pavements; thy fountains were of silver, and thy daughters that walked in thy groves were as the cherubim and the seraphim.

"Judah! thy temple was glorious as the sunrising, and thy priests were the wise of the earth.

Kings came against thee, and their bones were an offering; the fowls of the air devoured them; the foxes brought their young, and feasted them upon the mighty.

"Judah! thou wert as a fire in the midst of the nations—a fire upon an altar; who shall quench thee?—A sword over the neck of the heathen; who shall say unto thee, Smite no more! Thou wert as the thunder and the lightning: thou camest from thy place, and the earth was dark: the heaven was thine, the earth was at thy feet. Thou didst thunder, and the nations shook; and the fire of thy indignation consumed them."

The voice in which this extraordinary being uttered those words was like the thunder. The multitude listened with breathless awe. The appeal in the language of their own prophets, was to them a renewal of the times of inspiration; and they awaited with outstretched and quivering countenances the sentence, that their passions interpreted into the will of Heaven.

The figure lifted up his glance, that had hitherto been fixed on the ground; and, whether it was the work of fancy, or reality, I thought

that the glance threw an actual beam of fire across the upturned visages of the myriads that filled every spot on which a foot could rest; roof, wall, and ground.

Bowing his head, and raising his hands in the most solemn adoration towards the Temple, he pursued, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, yet indescribably impressive—

"Sons of the faithful Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; people chosen of God, elect and holy! Will you suffer that house of holiness to be the scoff of the idolater? Will you see the polluted sacrifice laid upon its altars? Will you be slaves and victims in the presence of the house of David?"

A rising outcry of the multitude showed how deeply they felt his words. A fierce smile lightened across his features at the sound. He erected his colossal form; and cried out, like the roar of a whirlwind, "Then, men of Judah, be strong, and follow the hand that led you through the sea and through the desert. Is that hand shortened, that it cannot save? Break off this accursed league with the sons of Belial.

Fly every man to arms, for the glory of the mighty people. Will the Most High desert his people! Go; and let the sword that smote the Canaanite, smite the Roman."

He was answered with furious exultation. Swords and poniards were brandished in the air. The safety of the Roman officers became endangered; and I, with some of the elders, dreading a result which must throw fatal obstacles in the way of pacification, attempted to control the popular violence by reason and entreaty. But the spirit of the Romans, haughty with conquest, and long contempt of rabble prowess, disdained to take precautions with a mob; and they awaited with palpable contempt in their faces the subsiding of this city efferves-cence. But this silent scorn, which probably stung the deeper for its silence, was retorted by clamours of unequivocal rage; the mysterious disturber saw the storm coming; and flinging a furious gesture towards the Roman camps, which lay glittering in the sun-shine along the hills, he rushed into the loftiest language of malediction.

"Take up a lament for the Roman," he shouted. "He comes like a leviathan; he troubleth the waters with his presence; and the rivers behold him, and are afraid.

"Thus saith the king, he who holdeth Israel in the hollow of his hand: I will spread my net over thee, and my people shall drag thee upon the shore; I will leave thee to rot upon the land; I will fill the beasts of the earth with thee, until they shall come and find thee dry bones and dust, even thy glory turned into a taint and a scorn.

"Lift up a cry over Rome, and say; Thou art the leopard; thy jaws are red with blood, and thy claws are heavy because of the multitude of the slain; thy spots are glorious, and thy feet are like wings for swiftness. But thy time is at hand. My arrow shall smite through thee; my steel shall go through thee: I will lay thy flesh upon the hills, thy blood shall be red in the rivers, the pits shall be full of thee.

"For, thus saith the king, I have not for-saken my children. For my pleasure [illegible] given them over for a little wh[illegible]

of the oppressor; but they have loved me—they have come before me, and offered up sacrifices; and shall I desert the land of the chosen, the sons of the glorious, my people Israel!" A universal outcry of sorrow, wrath, and triumph, followed this allusion to the national sufferings.

"Ho!" exclaimed the figure. "Men of Israel, hear the words of wisdom. The burden of Rome. By the swords of the mighty will I cause her multitude to fall; the terrible and the strong shall be on thee, city of the idolater; they shall hew off thy cuirasses, as the hewer of wood; and of thy shields, they shall make vessels of water. There shall be fire in thy palaces, and the sword. Thy sons and thy daughters shall they consume; and thy precious things shall be a spoil, when the king shall give the sign from the sanctuary." He paused, and lifting up his fleshless arm, stood like a giant bronze pointing to the Temple.

To the utter astonishment of all, a vapour was seen to ascend from the summit of Mount [illegible] wreathing and white like the smoke [illegible]ark the Daily Sacrifice. Our

first conception was, that this great interrupted rite was resumed; and the shout of joy was on our lips. But the vapour had scarcely parted from the crown of the hill, when it blackened, and began to whirl with extraordinary rapidity; it thenceforth less ascended than shot up, perpetually darkening and distending. The horizon grew dim, the cloudy canopy above continued to spread and revolve; lightning began to quiver through; and we heard, at intervals, long low peals of thunder. But no rain fell, and the wind was lifeless. Nothing could be more complete than the calm; not a hair of our heads was moved; yet the heart of the countless multitude was penetrated with the dread of some impending catastrophe, that restrained every voice; and the silence itself was awful.

In the climate of Judea we had been accustomed to the rapid rise and violent devastations of tempests. But the rising of this storm, so closely connected with the appearance of the strange summoner, that it almost followed his command; invested a phenomenon, at all times fearful,

with a character that might have struck firmer minds than those of the enthusiasts round him. To heighten the wonder, the progress of the storm was still faithful to the command. Where-ever this man of mystery waved his arm, there rushed a sheet of cloud. The bluest tract of heaven was black as night the moment he turned his ominous presence towards it, until there was no more sky to be obliterated, and, but for the fiery streaks that tore through, we should have stood under a canopy of solid gloom.

At length the whirlwind that we had seen driving and rolling the clouds, like billows, burst upon us; roaring as it came; scattering fragments of the buildings far and wide, and cutting a broad way through the overthrown multitude. Then superstition and terror were loud-mouthed. The populace, crushed and dashed down, exclaimed that a volcano was throwing up flame from the mount of the Temple; that sulphurous smokes were rising through the crevices of the ground; that the rocking of an earthquake was felt; and, still more terrible, that beings not to be looked on, nor even to

be named, were hovering round them in the storm.

The general rush of the multitude, in which hundreds were trampled down, and in which nothing but the most violent efforts could keep any on their feet, bore me away for a while. The struggle was sufficient to absorb all my senses, for nothing could be more perilous. The darkness was intense. The peals of the storm were deafening; and the howlings and fury of the crowd, trampling and being trampled on, and fighting for life in blindness and despair, with hand, foot, and dagger, made an uproar louder than that of the storm. In this conflict rather of demons than of men, I was whirled away in eddy after eddy, until chance brought me again to the foot of the elevation.

There I beheld a new wonder. A column of livid fire stood upon it, reaching to the clouds. I could discern the outline of a human form within. But while I expected to see it drop dead, or blasted to a cinder, the flame spread over the ground, and I saw its strange inhabitant making signs like those of incantation.

He drew a circle upon the burning soil, poured out some unguent, which diffused a powerful and rich odour, razed the skin of his arm with a dagger, and let fall some drops of blood into the blaze.

I shuddered at the sight of those palpable appeals to the power of evil; but I was pressed upon by thousands, and retreat was impossible. The magician then, with a ghastly smile of triumph, waved the weapon towards the Roman camps. "Behold," he cried, "the beginnings of vengeance!" A thunder-roll, that almost split the ear, echoed round the hills. The darkness passed away with it. Above Jerusalem the sky cleared, and cleared into a translucence and blue splendour, unrivalled by the brightest sun-shine. The people, wrought up to the highest expectancy, shouted at this promise of a prouder deliverance, and exclaiming, "Goshen! Goshen!" looked breathlessly for the completion of the plague upon the more than Egyptian oppressor. They were not held long in suspense.

The storm had cleared away from above our

heads only to gather in deeper terrors round the circle of the hills, on which we could see the enemy in the most overwhelming state of uncertainty and alarm. The clouds rushed on, ridge over ridge, till the whole horizon seemed shut in by a wall of night towering to the skies. I heard the deep voice of the magician; at the utterance of some wild words, a gleam played round the dagger's point, and the wall of darkness was instantly a wall of fire. The storm was let loose in its rage. While we stood in day-light and in perfect calm, the lightning poured like sheets of rain, or gushes of burning metal from a furnace, upon the enemy. The vast circuit of the camps was one blaze. The wind tore every thing before it with irresistible violence. We saw the tents swept off the ground, and driven far over the hills in flames, like meteors; the piles of arms and banners blown away; the soldiery clinging to the rocks, or flying together in helpless crowds, or scattering, like maniacs, with hair and garments on fire; the baggage and military machines, the

turrets and ramparts sinking in flames; the beasts of burthen plunging and rushing through the lines, or lying in smouldering heaps where the lightning first smote them.

CHAPTER X.

THE Roman troop had hitherto remained in stern composure. The visitations of nature they were accustomed to sustain; the perturbations of a Jewish mob were beneath the notice of the universal conquerors. But the sight of the havock among their countrymen shook their stoicism; and the cavalry that formed the escort burst into indignant murmurs at the loud exultation of the multitude; until the commander of the troop, a young officer, whose arms and bearing showed him to be of the highest rank, unable to restrain his feelings, spurred to the front of the embarrassed mission.

"How long," exclaimed he, "senators, shall

we stand here to be scoffed at by these wretches? The imperial guard feels itself disgraced by such a service. Will you have the troop openly mutiny? If they should ride away and leave us to ourselves, who could blame them? Decide what is to be done. What will the noble Titus say, when we return to tell him that we stood by and listened to the taunts of those cooped-up slaves on him, the army, and Rome? But how long shall we be suffered even to listen? Linger here, and before the day is out, before the hour is out, your lives will be at the mercy of those assassins. And, by the immortal gods, richly shall we all deserve our fate, for having come into this den but as masters, riding over the necks of those last and lowest of mankind."

It was fortunate for the speaker that he spoke in a language but little known to our bold peasantry. The senators held their peace, and waited for the subsiding of the popular effervescence.

"Noble Sempronius," exclaimed the fiery youth, to a grave and lofty-countenanced man,

at the head of the mission, "to remain here is only to risk your safety, and the honour of the emperor. Treaty with this people is out of the question. Give me the order to move now, and I will be responsible for your security. Or rather, give me the order to disperse this rabble, and a single charge will decide the affair."

He threw himself forward on his horse's neck, and fixed his look eagerly on the senator's countenance. But the old Roman was immoveable. The magician, who had stood with his robe wrapped round his arms, in an attitude of contemptuous ease, awaiting the result of the demand, burst into loud laughter. The young soldier's indignation was roused by this new object. He turned to the scorner, and crying out, "Ha! is it you, miscreant? you at least shall not escape me," flung his lance full against his bosom. I saw the weapon strike with prodigious force; but it might as well have struck a rock. It flew into splinters.

The Roman rushed at him with his drawn falchion. His strange antagonist stood without moving a limb, and only raised his cold, large

eye. The charger, in his fiercest bound, instantly swerved, and had nearly unseated his rider. Nothing could bring him forward again. Spur and voice were useless. The animal, a magnificent jet-black, of the largest Turcoman breed, strong as a bull and bold as a lion, could not abide that stern eye. He galloped madly round and round, but the attempt to urge him against the stranger stopped him, as if he were stabbed. Then, with every muscle in his frame palpitating, his broad chest heaving, his nostrils breathing out thick vapour, and the foam flying over his front like snow, he would plunge and roar, till, mastering his powerful rider, he wheeled round, and darted away.

The shouts of scorn that rose from the populace at every fresh failure doubly enraged the young Roman. He made a final effort, and grasping the bridle in both hands, and dashing in the spur, at length succeeded in forcing on the wearied charger. The noble creature at one immense leap reached the fated spot. But there he was fixed, as if some power had transformed him into stone. He no longer staggered

nor swerved, but crouching down, with his feet thrust forward, his crest stooped, his nostrils on the ground, and his brilliant eye strained and filmy, as if he were growing blind, stood gazing with a look of almost human horror. The furious rider struck him on the head with the flat of his falchion. The charger gathered up his limbs at the blow, reared straight as a column, and bellowing, plunged upon his forehead. There was a general cry of terror even among the multitude, and they rushed forward to help him to rise. But he rose no more. He rolled over and over his rider, and stretching out his limbs with a convulsion, died.

The tumult was on the point of being renewed; for the soldiery pushed forward to bear away their officer, who lay like a corpse; but the crowd had already covered the ground; and blows were given on both sides. Indignant at the interruption of the armistice, and the injury that threatened the sacred person of ambassadors, I forced my way through the crowd, and by exerting a strength with which few could cope, rescued the body of the young Roman,

and delivering it to the mission, protested against their construing the casual violence of rioters into the determination of the people.

I had partially succeeded in calming their resentment, and in restraining the blood-thirsty weapons that were already glittering in numberless hands; when a sound like that of a trumpet, distant, but blown with tremendous force, struck every ear at once.

The magician pointed to the heavens directly above his head. A small fragment of cloud, that seemed to have escaped from the mass of the tempest only to contrast with the brightness, was floating along the zenith. He took up his parable : "Have I not covered the heavens with a cloud? saith the Mighty One. Have I not said to the sun, Be dark; and to the moon and stars, Be ashamed? Have I not hidden mine enemies in the shroud, and said to the whirlwind, Go forth and slay?"

His gesture turned all eyes to the wrecks of the Roman camp, where the whirlwind continued to ravage and the thunders still roared. Then throwing himself forward, with a look

full of wild grandeur, and in a voice hollow and appalling as the storm, he exclaimed :—

"Behold! this day shall a wonder be wrought among you :—this day shall a mighty thing be brought to pass. Kings shall see it, and tremble; yea, the heathen shall melt before thee. Their strength shall be as water, and their hearts as the burning flax. Sorrow shall be on them, as the locust on the green field; and they shall flee as from a lion. Behold! in the cloud shall a sword be brandished before thee; in smoke and in fire shalt thou conquer. For his angel shall come; and the sword and the flame shall at this hour be a sign unto Israel!"

Whether by the proverbial sagacity of the wanderers of the desert, by knowledge from some darker source, or simply by one of those coincidences which so curiously come to sustain the credit of daring conjecture, the little orbed vapour began to lengthen, and rapidly assumed the shape of a sword!

Dreading the popular power of imposture, and the uses to which it would inevitably be applied, I was glad that this extraordinary

being had thus put himself upon his trial; and I stood gazing in eager expectation that some passing gust would dissipate at once the cloud, and the reputation of the prophet. Yet, utterly scorning the common pretensions of the rambling practisers of forbidden arts, I knew that awful things had been done; that, most of all, in these latter days of our country, strange influences were let loose, perhaps to plunge into deeper ruin a people guiltily prone to take refuge in delusions. I had heard prophecies, hideous and unholy, yet which were never taught by man; I had seen a command of the elements that utterly defied philosophy to account for them. If, in the last vengeance of Heaven, evil spirits were ever suffered to go forth and give their power to evil men, for the purpose of binding in the faster chains of falsehood a race who loved a lie, it was in those hours of signs and wonders, that might, if possible, deceive the very elect.

To my astonishment, the cloud suddenly changed its colour: from white it became intensely red; and, in a few moments more, it burst into a flame, that threw a broad reflection

upon the whole atmosphere. It was, palpably, a vast falchion of fire—the centre of a fiery halo. And from that hour to the last of the glorious and unhappy city of David, that flaming sword, the sign of wrath predicted a thousand years before, blazed day and night over Jerusalem!

But its instant effect was terrible. The multitude, already indignant against the Romans, and restrained only by my desperate efforts, were now roused to the highest pitch of presumption. To doubt of the help of Heaven was impiety, after this open wonder: to spare an hour between this divine command and the extermination of the idolaters, was sacrilege. They poured round the unfortunate troop; and instantly overwhelmed them, as an earthquake would have overwhelmed them. A mass of human life, dense as the ground it trod upon, broke over them. The Romans struggled heroically: I saw their charges often make fearful way; and their swords and lances dripping with blood every time that they were whirled round their heads. But the conflict was too unequal: one by one those brave men were torn

down; I saw them swept along by the torrent, fewer and fewer still above the living wave; gradually separated more widely from each other, each man faintly struggling for himself, flinging his feeble arms to the right and left, till, dizzy with fatigue and despair, at last down he went, and the roaring tide closed over him.

All perished; and a day of hope was closed in superstition, treachery, and inexpiable murder.

CHAPTER XI.

It was night before I could extricate myself from the tumult. The attempt to save the unfortunate men who so fatally trusted to our good faith, had led me gradually down to the gates; and the greater portion of the city lay between me and home. To traverse it was still a matter of danger. Furious festivity had succeeded to conflict: the roving mountaineers made little difference between a stranger and an enemy; and whether inflamed with wine, triumph, or the love of violence, the carousers, on that night, were masters of Jerusalem.

I kept my course through the less frequented ways; and leaving on either side the great

avenues, crowded with tents, and glittering with illumination, committed myself to the quiet light of the moon, now touching the eastern verge.

But in choosing the more solitary streets, I was, without recollecting it, led into the open place where the late disturbance had begun; and I felt some vague dread of passing a spot on which had appeared a being so singular as the leader of the day.

By a compromise with my prudence, I kept as far from the hillock as possible; and was moving rapidly along beside the wall of one of the huge buildings of Herod, when I felt my robe grasped. In the nervousness of the time, and doubtful from what region of earth or air my antagonist in that place of spells might come, I drew my dagger with a sensation that I had never felt in the field, and setting my back against the wall, stood on my defence. But a groan and a fall at my feet made me sheathe the weapon, and ascertain how far I could relieve the sufferer. I raised him from the ground, and by the moon-light recognised

the commander of the escort. The dying struggles of his charger had crushed him; and the multitude, too busy to try whether life was or was not totally extinguished, abandoned him to his fate.

To leave him where he was, was to leave him to perish. I owed something to the survivor of the unfortunate mission; and my short consultation closed, by carrying him on my shoulders to the door of my comfortless dwelling.

The Roman had formidably learned to distrust Jewish fidelity. The gloom inside the entrance, looked the very colour of secret murder; and during the time of his transit from the market-place, he had found leisure to conclude that he was the victim of but a more dexterous assassin, who wished to join the profit of plunder to the national pleasure of revenge. Even the dismantled appearance of the exterior was enough for suspicion; and he firmly ordered that I should terminate my good offices at the threshold. Irritated and insulted by his obvious meaning, I left him to his wish; and placing him in the fullest enjoyment of such security as

the open street and the moon-light could give, took my farewell, bidding him in future have a better opinion of mankind.

Yet I was to be startled in my turn. As I rather climbed, than ascended, the broken stair-cases, I saw an unusual light from the chambers above, and heard the sound of voices, and the movement of rapid feet. Accustomed as I was to reverses, I felt tenfold alarm from the preciousness of my stake. The ferocious bands that crowded the streets, inflamed with wine and blood, could have no scruples where plunder tempted them; and, in the strong persuasion that some misfortune had happened in my long absence, I lingered, in doubt whether I should not return to the streets, collect what assistance I could among the passers-by, and crush the robbers by main force. But sudden exclamations, and hurried feet above, left me no time; I darted up the shattered steps, and breathlessly threw open the door.

Well might I wonder. I saw a superb room hung with tapestry; a table in the centre covered with plate and viands; a rich lamp

illuminating the chamber; stately furniture; a fire blazing on a tripod, and throwing a cheering warmth and delicious odour round; and to enjoy all this, not a living creature.

But whatever my anxieties might be, they were delightfully scattered by the voice of Esther, who came flying towards me with outstretched arms, and a face bright with joy. From the inner chamber followed more messengers of good tidings, Miriam and Salome leading Constantius. They had watched over him from the time of my departure, with a sickly alternation of hope and fear; as the evening approached, he seemed dying. Salome, with the jealousy of deep sorrow, desired to be left alone with him; and the two sad listeners at the door expected every moment the burst of agony announcing his irreparable loss. They heard a cry of joy: the torpor was gone; and Constantius was sitting up, raised to new life, wondering at all round him, and uttering the raptures of gratitude and love.

The rush of feet that had impelled me to my abrupt entrance, was the haste of my family to

bring the recovered patient in triumph from his weary bed into the view of the comforts provided for him and me. The change wrought in the chamber itself, was explained by the presence of two old domestics, who, after the flight of the former possessors, had been overlooked, and suffered to hide rather than live in a corner of the ruin. They had contrived in the general spoliation, to secrete some of the precious things which the haste of plunder had not time to seize. The presence of a noble family under the honoured roof once more, brought out their feelings and treasures together; and by the graceful dexterity of Miriam and Esther, were those sad and naked walls converted into an apartment not unworthy to be inhabited by themselves.

While I was indulging in the luxury which those gentle ministers provided, the thought of the unfortunate Roman occurred to me. I slightly mentioned him, and every voice was raised to have him brought in from the hazards of the night. Constantius, feeble as he was, rose from his couch to assist in this work of

hospitality; but he was under a fond tyrant who would not suffer her commands to be questioned. Salome's orders were obeyed; and to the old domestic and me was destined the undivided honour.

I found the wounded officer lying on the spot where I had parted with him, gazing on the moon, and humming a gay popular air in a most melancholy tone. He had palpably made up his reckoning with this world; and calmly waiting until some Jewish knife should put an end to his song, he determined to save himself from the trouble of thinking, and die like a man who had nothing better to do. But the struggle was against nature; and as I slowly felt my way along the obscure passages, I had time to hear the song flutter, and now and then a groan supersede it altogether. My step caught his quick ear, and I heard in return the ringing of a sword plucked sharply from the scabbard.

The bold Roman, reckless as he was of life, was evidently resolved not to let it go without a price; and it was probably fortunate for me,

or my old and tottering fellow-philanthropist, that the ruinous state of the passages compelled us to take time in our advance.

"Two of them," I heard him mutter, as we gradually worked our way towards the light, "two of them, and perhaps twenty at their backs." He tried to raise himself up against the door-post, leaning on one hand, and with the other feebly pointing the falchion to keep us off. "Thieves," said he, "let us understand each other. If you must cut my throat, you must fight for it; and after all, I have nothing to make it worth your trouble. By Jove and Venus," and he laughed with the strange jocularity that sometimes besets the bold in the last peril, "the cleverest robber in Jerusalem could make nothing of me." I stood in the shadow, listening till he had disburdened his soul. "My clothes would not sell for the smallest coin in your sashes; I could not furnish out a scarecrow:—yet, Jewish patriots, or thieves, or saints, or all together, I will tell you how you can make money of me. Take me to the Roman camp, and I answer for

your fortune on the spot." I laughed in my turn. "By all that's honest, I never was more serious in my life," said he. "Far be it from me to trifle with heroes of your profession. You shall have this helmet-full of gold Vespasians."

"Well then, you shall live at least for to-night. However, there is one condition which I cannot give up—"

"Of course, that I give you two helmets-full instead of one. Agreed."

"The condition from which nothing can make me recede is—"

"Three times the money; or ten times the money?" I pondered. The old domestic stared at us both.

"Why; you extravagant Jew, have you no conscience? Recollect how little the lives of half the generals in the service are worth half the sum. But, say any thing, short of the military chest—out with the condition at once."

"That you come instantly with me to supper."

The formidable stipulation was gaily acceded to. The old domestic and I supported him

up the stairs, whose condition, as he afterwards allowed, led him still to nurture shrewd doubts of Jewish hospitality. But, when I opened the door of the chamber, and he saw the striking preparations within, he uttered a cry of surprise; and turning, bowed with Italian grace, in tacit acknowledgment of the wrong that he had done me.

As I led him forward, and the light fell on his features, I saw Esther's countenance glow with crimson. The Roman pronounced her name, and flew over to her. Miriam—we all, in the same moment, recognised the stranger, and every lip at once uttered "Septimius!"

A few campaigns in the imperial guard had changed the handsome Italian boy, the friend and favourite of Constantius, into the showy officer, the friend and favourite of every body; with the elegance of the court, and the freedom of the camp, he had inherited from nature the easy lightness and animation of temper, that neither can give. Nothing could be more amusing than the restless round of anecdote that he kept up through the night. The circle in

which he found himself, contrasted with the wretchedness of the few hours before, let his recollections flow with wild vivacity. His stories, however exhausted in the society of the imperial tent, were new to us, and he told them with the taste of a man of high breeding, and the sarcastic finish of a keen observer of the absurdities that will creep in among the mighty and the wise of the world.

In our several ways he delighted us all. Constantius seemed to gain years of health, laughing at the ludicrous histories of his military friends. Salome's face glistened with the vividness so long chased away by sorrow, as the manners of Rome passed before her in the liveliest colours of pleasantry. Esther treasured every word, with an emotion that fluctuated across her beauty, like the opening and shutting of a rose under the evening breeze. I was interested by the pungent sketches of public character, that started up in the midst of sportive description. Miriam alone was reluctant, and her glance frequently rested with pain on Esther's hectic cheek; but even Miriam some

times gave way to the voice of the charmer; her fears were forgotten, and she joined in the general smile.

When the females retired, we held a short consultation on the means of restoring our guest to his friends. In the immediate disturbance of the city, to be seen was to encounter certain death; and no pacific intercourse with the besiegers could be expected after our enormous infraction of treaty. Constantius urged the despatch of a private messenger to the camp, with some proposal of a plan for his escape. To my surprise, and certainly to my gratification, Septimius himself flatly negatived the measure.

"It has too much hazard for my taste," said he, sportively. "Your messenger will probably be caught by the people, and as probably hanged; or, if he reach the camp, he will be hanged there inevitably. Jewish credit in general, does not stand high within these twelve hours with my countrymen. If the fellow die here like a woman,—with a story in his mouth; you will be brought under the jus-

tice of your sovereign lord the mob, and there will be an end of every human being belonging to you. If my countrymen inflict the axe, you are not the safer; for every peasant about the camp is a spy, and the news will travel here in the next half hour; and, after all, your trouble will be thrown away. Titus has good-nature enough, and probably would not wish to see me hoisted on the top of a pike on your gates; but he is a furious disciplinarian, swears by the law of honour and arms, and is, I well know, chafing, like a roused lion, against every one who has had a share in this day's business. I myself should have a chance of hanging for an example, if I returned before his sovereign displeasure had time to cool. My relationship to him would be only a feather in the cap of his military stoicism; and minor personages would be warned against ill luck by the sight of the pendent blood imperial. So, I must trespass on your hospitality for a day or two."

"But what is to be finally done?" said I. "The armistice can never be tried again."

"Why not? Do you think that the loss of

a few troopers can make any difference? Out of twenty thousand cavalry we can easily spare a hundred. Those things have happened once a week since the beginning of the campaign. They agree with our notions admirably. The survivors get promotion; and whatever libation they may offer for their good luck, it is certainly not tears. A stupid officer, and on this occasion I fairly reckon myself among the number, is taken off the roll before he might have the opportunity of doing mischief by some blunder on a larger scale: experience is gained; dinners are given by the successors; we are entrapped no more, at least in the same way; and a parcel of unfortunates, who have spent half their lives in railing at the world, and being browbeat by their superiors, suddenly start into rank, become superiors themselves, learn to browbeat in their turn, and bless the day when the wheel of fortune, if it rolled down for others, rolled up for them. You will have the armistice again in a week."

The ease of this confession of soldiership repelled me a little; but its air of frankness

and disregard of chance and care, carried it off showily. I too was but a peasant-soldier, with my heart in every thing. The man before me was a son of the camp, the professional warrior, whose business it was to stifle all feelings but those of the camp. Yet, heroism and hard-heartedness!—I could not join them. I had still something to learn; and the gay philosopher of the sword lost ground with me.

I was retiring for the night; when I felt the soft hand of Miriam on my shoulder. "I have been anxious," said she, "to ask your opinion about this Roman." Her fine countenance, that reflected every emotion of her spirit like a mirror, showed that the subject was one of deep interest. "Is misfortune always to pursue us, Salathiel?" "In what possible shape at present?" said I. "We have spent some hours as amusing as I ever remember. What can have occurred since this morning, when your philosophy made so light of our actual evils?" "For external evils I have but little feeling," was her answer: "but I see in the chance that brought Septimius here to-night something of the fate

which you have so often said follows your house. I tremble for Esther's peace of mind. What if she should be attracted by this Roman?"

"Esther! my darling Esther! love an alien? a Roman idolater? What an abyss you open before me!"

"While Septimius remained among us in the mountains, I saw with terror that Esther's beauty attracted him. His Italian elegance was even then a dangerous charm for a mind so inexperienced and sensitive as hers. I knew the impossibility of their union, and rejoiced when his recovery allowed of his leaving the palace. But, for a long period after, Esther was evidently unhappy; her spirits gave way: she became fonder of solitude; and I believe that nothing but extreme care, and the change of scene which followed, preserved her from the grave."

"Miriam! I have no comfort to offer. I am a stricken man; misfortune must be my portion. But, if any thing were to bereave me of that girl, I feel that my heart would break. We must delay no longer. By the first light

the Roman shall quit this house,—this city. He shall not stay another hour to poison the peace of my family; the only peace that I now can consider or enjoy in the world."

"Yet, rashness must not disgrace what is true wisdom, my Salathiel. The Roman is here protected by the laws of courtesy. You cannot send him forth, without giving him over to the horrid temper of the populace. A few days may make that escape easy, which would now be impossible. Besides, I may have done him injustice, and mistaken the common pleasure of seeing unexpected friends, for the attempt to mislead the affections of our innocent and ardent child."

"No! By the first light he leaves this roof. The truth glares on me. I might have seen it in his looks. His language, however general, was perpetually directed to Esther by some personal allusion. His voice lost its ease when he answered a remark of hers. After she spoke, he affected abstraction; an old artifice. His manner is too well calculated to disturb the mind of woman—and most of all,

of woman cursed with feeling and genius. Esther has already imagined this brilliant profligate into a wonder! I must break the spell, or she must perish. What is to become of her? of me? man of misery!—By the first dawn the Roman takes his departure."

In bitterness of soul I turned from the chamber, where the lamps still burning, and the glittering table, looked too bright for the gloomy spirit of the hour. The cool air that breathed through a casement led me towards it; and, disinclined to speak, and holding Miriam's hand, I listened to the confused and sleepy murmurs of the city below.

I felt the hand in mine tremble convulsively. Miriam's face was pale with fear; she stood with lips apart and breathless; brows knitted; eyes straining upwards. In utter alarm, I asked the cause. She lifted the hand, which had fallen by her side, and slowly, like the staff of the soothsayer, pointed to the heavens. The cause was there. The ominous sword had, for the first time, met her eye. The blaze, which even in noon-day was fear-

fully visible, in midnight was tremendous. A blade, of the deepest hue of gore, stretched over the vast horizon, pouring from its edge perpetual streams and showers of crimson flame, that looked like showers of fresh blood. Boundless slaughter was in the emblem. Beyond it the circle of the sky was wan; the stars sickened; and the moon, though at the full, hung like an orb of lead. The mighty falchion, the pledge of a terrible and inevitable judgment, extinguished all the beneficent splendours of heaven.

"There, there is the Sign that I have seen for months in my dreams," said Miriam, in an awed voice; "that has haunted me whenever I laid my head upon my pillow; that has been before me in the day, wherever I moved; that I have seen colouring every object, every moment of my life, since I entered these fated walls. I have struggled to drive away the horrid image; I have wept and prayed. But it was where nothing could unfix it. It was pictured on my mind; and with it came other images, fearful, though they brought me no terrors.—Melancholy sights to those that have

no hope but here, yet glorious to the servants of the truth, Salathiel. I have had warnings. I must never leave the city of David." She knelt, in the deep prayer of the soul.

Her words came on me with the power of prophecy. "King and protector of Israel!" I exclaimed, "is this to be the suffering of thy holy ones? On me let thy will be done. But, spare her who now kneels before thee. Are the pure to be given into the hands of the merciless, and thy children to be trampled, as the ashes of the pile!"

My impatient voice caught Miriam's ear, and she rose, with a countenance beaming wisdom and love.

"Salathiel, we must not murmur. Even that sight of awe, that terrible emblem, has taught me the selfishness of my anxieties. What are our petty, personal sorrows to the weight of affliction figured in that instrument of supreme wrath? The woe of millions, the blood of a nation, the ruin of the glorious fabric built by the hands of the Eternal for his glory and the good of mankind, the fall of Israel, is written

in letters of flame before our eyes; and can I complain of the chances and hazards which may fall to my share? Henceforth, my husband and my love," and she threw herself into my willing arms, "you shall never be disturbed with my griefs; exercise your own powerful understanding, guard against evil by your talents and knowledge of life, as far as it can be guarded against by man; and beyond that, disdain to repine or fear. In my supplication I have committed our child into the hands of Him who sitteth on the circle of eternity!"

Quivering with every finer feeling of the heart, maternal love, matron faith, and grateful adoration, she hung upon my neck, until, as if a portion of her noble spirit had passed into mine, I felt a confidence and consolation like her own.

CHAPTER XII.

I WAS spared the ungraciousness of urging the young soldier's departure; for when I met him next morning, his first topic was the means of escape. He had been since day-break examining from my turrets the accessible passages of the fortifications, and had even, by the help of a peasant, despatched a letter to his friends, requesting either a formal demand of his person from the Jews, or some private effort to extricate him.

But, with the night the glow of soldiership was gone. In the fall of his charger he had been violently bruised. He complained of inward suffering, and his pallid face and feeble

words gave painful proof that he had much still to undergo. Though, even if he were perfectly recovered, the crowded battlements, and the popular rage, showed the impossibility of immediate return.

Three days passed thus drearily. At home I was surrounded by sickness, or vexed by suspicion, the worse sickness of the mind. Septimius lay in his chamber, struggling to laugh, talk, and read away the heavy hours ; and, finally, like all such strugglers, giving up the task in despair ; his ideas were in the Roman camp. He professed gratitude of the deepest nature for the service that I had done him now for the second time ; " if saving so unimportant a life was a service either to him or any one else. Yet, he almost wished that he had been left where he was found. A man could not finish his course better than among his gallant comrades ; and with all his anxiety to return, he felt no trivial concern as to the view which Titus might take of the whole unfortunate affair. Of justice he was secure ; but, to be questioned for his military conduct, was in itself a degra-

dation. The loss of Sempronius too, a most confidential friend and councillor of the Emperor, would weigh heavily;—while there was nothing but his own testimony to sustain his honour against the crowd of secret enemies, which every man of military rank was certain to have. In short," said he, "on my sleepless couch, I have turned true penitent for the foolish curiosity, or boyish desire, of mixing myself with public matters, or extravagant illusion, which prompted me to volunteer, nay, solicit the command of an escort, which would have been by right put under the care of some mere tribune."

I tried to cheer him, by saying that his had been only the natural desire of an active mind to see so singular a scene as our city offered; or the honourable wish of a soldier to be foremost wherever there was any thing to be done.

"It was more than either," said he; "there was actual illusion in the case. I now feel that I was practised upon. You know the strange concourse of all kinds of people that follow a

camp for all kinds of purposes.—Plunderers, traders, and jugglers, crowding on our movements, as regularly as the crows, and with nearly the same objects. For a week past, I had found myself beset by an old, gibbering slave of this class. Wherever I rode, the fellow was before my eyes; he contrived to mingle with my servants, and became a sort of favourite, by selling them counterfeit rings and gems at ten times their value. The wretch was clever too; and as my tent hours began to be disturbed by the unusual gaiety of the listeners to his lies, I ordered him to be flogged out of the lines. But twelve hours had not passed, before I found him gamboling again; and was about to order the instant infliction of the discipline, when he threw himself on the ground, and implored "a moment of my secret ear." Conceive who the fellow was?"

"The impostor that harangued in the square!"

"The very man. He told me that there were certain contrivances on foot, to bring me into disfavour with the general; which I knew to be

the fact. He gave me the names of the parties, which I felt to be sufficiently probable; and finished by saying, that having so long eaten of my bread, (a week,) and enjoyed my liberality, (the promise of the whip,) he longed to show his gratitude, by giving me an opportunity of putting my enemies to silence on the spot. This opportunity was, to solicit the command of the escort required for the mission. How he gained his wisdom, I know not; but I took the advice, went instantly to Titus, found that an armistice was being debated in council, that there was some difficulty in the choice of an officer for a service, by no means likely to be a sinecure in point of either judgment or hazard; stepped forward, and, to the surprise of every body, disclaimed the privileges of my rank, and insisted on marching at the head of this handful, this centurion's guard, into the formidable city of Jerusalem."

"His object of course was your destruction. I now see the cause of the harangue that roused the people; he was in the pay of the conspirators against you. Yet, his appearance was

striking: there was a vigour about his look and language, a fierce consciousness of power somewhere, that distinguished him from his race. He came too, and disappeared, without my being able to discover whence or whither."

"Oh, the commonest contrivance of his trade. Those fellows always come and go in a cloud, if they can. He was probably beside you half the day, before and after. You saw how little he thought of the lance that I sent to bring out his secrets. He doubtless wore a corslet. Otherwise there would have been one juggler the less in the world. The truth is, I have been duped, but I have made up my mind to think nothing about the dupery. The slave is certainly clever, perhaps to an extraordinary degree—a knave undoubtedly, and of the first magnitude. But he has the secret of the cabal against me; and that secret makes him at once fit to be employed, and dangerous to be provoked. The blow of the lance yesterday showed him that I am not always to be trifled with. In fact, prince, you might find it advantageous to employ him occasionally

yourself. It was he who conveyed my letter to the camp this morning!"

My look probably expressed my alarm at this species of envoy.

"You may rely on my honour," said the Roman, "not to involve you in any of the fellow's inventions. Slippery as he is, I have a hold on him too, that he will not venture to shake off. And now, to let you into full confidence; I expect him back this very night, when he will relieve your city of an inhabitant unworthy of remaining among so polished a people, and your house, my prince, of an inmate, than whom none on earth can be more grateful for your hospitality."

He concluded this mixture of levity, address, and frankness, with a smile, and in a tone of elegance, that compelled me to take it all on the more favourable side. But against suffering the step of his strange emissary to pollute the threshold in which I lived, I expressed my plain determination.

"For that too I have provided," said he. "My intercourse with the reprobate is to take

place at another quarter of the city, as far as possible," and he laughed, "for reasons equally of mine and yours, from this dwelling. I have managed matters so as not to compromise any of my friends; and, to make my arrangements on that point still more secure, may I express a wish that neither Constantius nor any other person of your house may be acquainted with my intention of leaving them, and, I may sincerely say, leaving every thing that could gratify my best feelings,—this very evening."

This was an easy and graceful avoidance of the difficulties which his longer residence threatened. I gave him the promise of secrecy, cautioning him against reposing any dangerous confidence in his emissary, of whom I had an irrepressible abhorrence; and was about to leave the chamber, when he caught my hand, and said in unusual emotion—

"Prince of Naphtali, I have but one word more to say. You are a man of the world, and can make allowance for the giddiness of human passions. Some of them are uncontrollable, or at least, which I have never learned

to control; and in me perhaps belong to inferiority of mind. But if, on my departure, you should hear calumnies against me—"

"Impossible, my young friend; or if I should, you may rely on my giving the calumniators a very brief answer."

"Or, if even yourself should be disposed to think severely of me;—you know the circumstances under which a man of birth and fortune must be placed, in our profession."

"I do; and am much more disposed to regret, than to wonder at the consequences."

"If you should hear that I had been assailed, in an evil hour, by an unexpected temptation, which I had long laboured to resist; assailed by it under the most powerful circumstances that ever yet tasked the human mind; circumstances to which, from the beginning of the world, wisdom has been proverbially folly, and resolution weakness; if it should have mastered my whole being—spirit, soul, and body; if I were willing to give up the brightest prospects for its possession—to hazard life, hope, honours—"

The thought of Esther smote me. I started

from him, where he stood, with his fine head drooping like the Antinous, and his figure the very emblem of passionate dejection. "Roman, you are here as my guest; and as such I have listened to you with patience until now. But, if any member of my family is concerned in what you say; I desire, in the most distinct terms, that the subject shall be mentioned no more. The daughters of Israel are sacred. Never shall a child of mine wed with those who now lord it over my unhappy country."

He spread his hands and eyes in the broadest astonishment. "Prince, can it be possible that you have so totally mistaken me? My perplexities are of an entirely different nature. Do me justice; I laugh at the triflings of human passion, as unworthy of men of common sense. And, allowing, as every man of taste must allow, the beauty of the females of your distinguished house, believe me, that I have been too busy with matters of painful interest, to have given more than a glance to their unquestionable attractions. Now; let us understand each other, as soldiers and men of honour.—The chain with

which I am bound is not of roses, but of iron; a chain of invisible, yet stern influences, that haunt my night, and even my day. Right glad should I be, to find myself free enough from that hideous bond, to be capable of admiring the beauty of woman." His voice faltered, and he turned away with a shudder, as from a visionary tormentor.

"What! has that accursed dealer in spells, that man of desperate arts, if he be man, involved you too in his net? I know the superstitions of your country; and how deeply they darken the understanding. But dares the impostor soar so high!"

He shook from head to foot; and clasped his hands with the violence of despair. "You saw how he defied, how he mocked at me, how he spurned me when my abhorrence rose to the madness of attempting to strike him. I might as well have flung the weapon at the clouds. You saw the instinctive terror of my charger. That animal was celebrated in our whole cavalry for its bold, nay, furious, spirit. Yet, before the eye of that man of power and evil, it

cowered like a hare, and died of his glance. By him the temptation has been offered; of its nature I dare not speak; but it is dazzling, fearful, and must, I feel it,—must finally be fatal."

"Then cast it from you at once. Be a man —a hero."

"It is hopeless—I must be the victim; I am bound irretrievably.—Farewell, prince; we shall see each other no more."

He flung himself upon the couch. I offered him assistance, advice, consolation, in vain. The spirit of the soldier was extinguished. The victim of fantastic illusion lay before me. I left him to the care of the old domestic; and when I closed the door, thought that I had closed the door of the grave.

CHAPTER XIII.

During this period the city presented the turbulent aspect that must result from the concourse of vast and warlike multitudes, nearly strangers to each other, or known only by hereditary bickerings. The pride of the clansman of Judah looked down upon every human being, and his countrymen among the rest. The Benjamite retorted it, boasted of the inheritance of Jerusalem, and looked down upon the men of the Galilees as rioters and plunderers. These too had their objects of scorn; and the remnants of the tribes of Dan and Ephraim were held in merciless disdain, as the descendants of rebels and idolaters. To deepen those ancient feuds

were thrown in the mutual injuries of the factions of John and Simon. Their leaders were now but the shadow of what they had been; yet the memory of their mischiefs survived with a keenness aggravated by the public discovery of the miserable insignificance of the instruments.

Power and genius in the tyrant offer the consolation, that if the chain have galled us, it has been bound by a hand made for supremacy. The last misery of the slave is to have been bound by a creature even more contemptible than himself; to have given to folly the homage due to talent; to have stooped before meanness, and trembled under the frown of the feeble.

The obvious losses and alarm of the enemy, who had now totally withdrawn from the plain, and were occupied with raising rampart on rampart round their several camps; the triumph over the unfortunate troop; and the excitement of a crowd of diviners, pretended prophets, and frantic visionaries, filled the populace with every vanity of conquest. The constant exclamation in the streets was—" Let us march to

storm the camps, and drive the idolater into the sea!" But the new luxuries of the city were too congenial, not to act as formidable rivals to the popular ambition. No leader appeared; the boastings passed away; and the boiling temperament of the warrior had time to run into the safer channel of words and wine.

Yet, one melancholy remembrancer was there. Through the midst of the wildest festivity, through the groups of drinking, dancing, bravadoing, and quarrelling, Sabat the Ishmaelite moved, day by day, from dawn till evening, pouring out his sentences of condemnation. Nothing could be more singular, nor more awful, than his figure; as the denouncer of ruin hurried along, like a being denuded of all objects in life but the one. The multitude, in their most extravagant excess, felt undissembled fear before him. I have seen the most ferocious tumult stilled by the distant sound of his portentous voice. The dagger was instantly sheathed, the head buried in the garment; the form often prostrate until he passed by. Where

he went, the song of licence was dumb; the dance ceased; the cup fell from the hand; and many a lip of violence and blasphemy quivered with long-forgotten prayer.

How he sustained life, none could tell. He was reduced to the thinnest anatomy; his eye had the yellow glare of blindness; his once raven hair was of the whiteness of flax. He was an animated corpse. But he still had the stride of a giant; he drove onward with a force which, if few attempted to resist, none seemed able to withstand; his gestures were rapid and nervous in an extraordinary degree, and his voice was overwhelming. It had the rush and volume of a powerful gust of wind. Even in the hubbub of the day, through the innumerable noises of the streets, it was audible from the remotest quarters of the city. I have heard it through the tread and shouts of fifty thousand marching men. But, in twilight and silence, the eternal "Woe—woe—woe" howled along the air with a sound that told of nothing human.

His unfortunate bride still followed him;

never uttering a word, never looking but on him. She glided along with him in his swiftest course, as bound by a spell to wander where he wandered, an unconscious slave; her form almost a shadow; without a sound, a gesture, or a glance; her feet alone moved.

I often attempted to render this undone pair some assistance. Sabat recognised me, and returned brief thanks; and perhaps I was the only man in Jerusalem to whom he vouchsafed either thanks or memory. But he uniformly refused aid of every kind, and reproaching himself for the moment given to human recollections, burst away, and began his denunciation of "Woe—woe—woe!"

The hope of treaty with the besiegers was now nearly desperate; yet I felt so deeply the ruin that must follow protracted war, that I had laboured with incessant anxiety to bring the people to a sense of their situation. My name was high; my decided refusal of all command or public rank gave me an influence which threw more grasping ambition into the shade; and the leading men of Jerusalem were

glad to delegate their power to me, with the double object of relieving themselves from an effort to which they were unequal, and from a responsibility under which even their covetousness and pride had begun to tremble.

But Jerusalem was not to be saved; there was an opposing fatality—an irresistible, intangible power, arrayed against my efforts. I felt it at my first step. If I had been treading on the vault of a volcano, and heard it roar under me, I could not have been made more sensible of the hollowness and hopelessness of every effort to save the nation. In the midst of our most according council some luckless impediment was sure to start up. While we seemed on the verge of conciliating and securing the most important interests, to that verge we were forbidden to approach. Communications actually commenced with the Roman general, and which promised the most certain results, were broken off, none could tell how. There was an antagonist somewhere, but beyond our grasp; a hostility as powerful, as constant, and as little

capable of being counteracted as the hostility of the plague.

After my final conversation with Septimius, I had spent the day in one of those perplexing deliberations, and was returning with a weary heart; when, in an obscure street leading to the Upper City, I was roused from my reverie by the sound of one of our mountain songs. Music has been among my chief solaces through existence, and the song of Naphtali at that moment of depression keenly moved me. I stopped to listen, in front of the minstrel's tent, in which a circle of soldiers and shepherds from the Galilees were sitting over their cups. His skill deserved a higher audience. He touched his little harp with elegance, to a voice that reminded me of the sportiveness and wild melody of a bird in spring. The moon-light shone through the tent; and, as the boy sat under the large white folds in the fantastic dress of his art, a loose vermilion robe, belted with sparkling stones, and turban of yellow silk, that drooped upon his shoulder like a golden pinion, he re-

sembled the Persian pictures of the Peri embosomed in the bell of the lily. The rude and dark-featured listeners round him might well have sat for the swart demons submissive to his will.

But thoughts soon returned that were not to be soothed by music; and throwing some pieces of money to the boy, I hastened on. The departure of the young Roman, and the influence that it might have on my family, and peculiarly on the mind of a creature doubly endeared to me by a strange and melancholy similitude to the temper of my own excitable mind, deeply occupied me; and it was even with some presentiment of evil that I reached home.

The first sound that I heard was the lamentation of the old domestics. But I could not wait to solve their unintelligible attempts to explain the disaster. I flew to my family. Miriam was absorbed in profound sorrow; Salome was in loud affliction. Dreading every thing that could be told me, yet with that sullen hardihood which long misfortune gives, I took my wife's hands, and, in a voice struggling for com-

posure, desired her to tell me the worst at once.

"Esther is gone!" was her answer. She could articulate no more; the effort to speak this shook her whole frame. But Salome broke out into loud reprobation of the baseness of the wretch who had turned our hospitality into a snare; and whose life, twice saved, was employed only to bring misery on his preserver.

The blow fell upon me with the keenness of a sword. "Was Esther, was my daughter, my innocent, darling Esther, consenting to this flight?"

"I know not," said Miriam. "I dare not ask myself the question. If she can have forgotten her duty, to follow the stranger; if she can have left her parents!—no; it must have been through some horrid artifice. But the thought is too bitter. Raise no more such thoughts in my mind."

She sank in silence. But Salome was not to be restrained. She asserted the total impossibility of Esther's having thrown off her allegiance to religion and filial duty. "She must

have been either," said this generous and enthusiastic being, "subjected to those dreadful arts in which the idolaters deal, and deluded by visions and evil powers; or carried away by actual force. Constantius has gone already in search of her; feeble as he is, he determined to discover the robbers; and though his steps were tottering, and the effort may hazard his life, he would not be restrained, nor would I restrain him, where I should have so much rejoiced to hazard my own."

I rose to depart. Miriam clung to me. "Must I lose all, Salathiel?"

"I am the guilty one, wife! I should have guarded against this. I alone am to blame.—Those tears reproach me more deeply than all the words in the world.—I will recover Esther. Without her we all should be miserable. The Roman general is just. I will demand her of Septimius in his presence. Miriam! you shall see your child. Salome! you shall see your sister. And now, come to my heart—come both; my last hope of happiness, the remnant of all that once promised to fill my declining

days with peace and prosperity.—Weep no more; Miriam! Salome! I must not be unmanned at this time of trial. Go to your chambers, and pray for me.—Farewell!"

It was nearly midnight, and the city sounds were hushed, except where the crowds, which still poured in, struggled for their quarters. The very fear of being thus disturbed kept up the disturbance of the population; and in the leading avenues the tents showed fierce watchers against this violence, sitting round their tables, until wine either sent them to sleep, or roused them into daggers-drawing. Subordination was at an end; plunder and blood were to be dreaded by every man who ventured among those champions of freedom and property; and more than once this night I was compelled to show that I wore a weapon.

But the disorder which left the city a seat of dissolute riot, was not suffered to interfere with the actual defence. That singular mixture of rabble giddiness and sacred care, which distinguished my countrymen above all nations, was fully displayed in those final hours; and the

walls that enclosed a million of rioters and robbers, were guarded with the solemn vigilance of a sanctuary.

No argument could prevail with the peasantry at the gate to let me pass. My rank, and even my public name, went for little in the scale, against the possibility of my renewing the treaty with an enemy whom they now scorned; and I was doubting whether I must not lose the night by the reluctance of those rough but honest sentinels, when I was cheered by seeing one of the head-men of their tribe arrive. He had been a furious politician; honour and honesty were his declared worship, and his horror of humbler motives was fierceness itself. This was enough for me. I knew what public vehemence means. I took him aside; without ceremony put gold into his grasp; and saw the gate thrown open before me by the immaculate hand of the patriotic Jonathan.

But while I had scarcely congratulated myself on having passed this formidable barrier, and was still within the defences; the trampling

of horse echoed on the road. The night was clear, and there was no hope of avoiding them, enclosed as I was with walls. A large body of Idumean horsemen came on, escorting waggons of provision. The foremost riders were half asleep, and I was in strong hope of eluding them all; when one of the drivers, in the wantonness of authority, laid his whip on me. I rashly returned the blow, and the man fell off his horse insensible. I was surrounded, charged with murder; was brought before their chieftain, and found that chieftain, Onias!

My old enemy recognised me instantly; and, with undying revenge firing every feature, demanded whither I was going.

"To the Roman camp," was the direct answer.

"The purpose?"

"To have an interview with the Roman general."

"You come deputed by the authorities?"

"By not one of them."

"I long ago knew you to be a bold fellow,

but you exceed my opinion. We cannot spare heroes from Jerusalem, at this time; so, you must turn back with us."

"By what right?"

"By the right of the stronger."

"With what object?"

"That you may be hanged as a deserter. It will save you the trouble of going to Titus to be hanged as a spy."

I disdained reply; and in the midst of a circle of barbarians exulting over their capture, as if they had taken the chief enemy of the state, was marched back to the walls.

There I was not the only person disturbed by the adventure. The first glimpse of me, caught by the captain of the night, exhibited every thing that could be ludicrous in the shape of consternation. To the inquiries, how I was suffered to pass, he answered, by an appeal to his "honour;" which he again valued, in my presence too, "as the most invaluable possession of the citizen soldier." He said the words without a blush, and I even listened to them without a smile. He probably trembled a little for his

bribe. But he soon discovered by my look, that I considered the money as too far gone to be worth pursuing.

Yet Onias, who seemed to know him as well as I, fixed on him a scrutinizing aspect, of all others the most hateful to a delicate conscience; and his only resource was to heap opprobrium upon me. How I had contrived to escape the guard, said Jonathan, "was totally inconceivable, unless it was by—" I gave him an assuring glance—" by imposing on the credulity of some of the ignorant peasants; possibly even by direct corruption. But, to put that matter out of future possibility, he would proceed to examine the prisoner's person."

He proceeded accordingly, and from my sash took my purse, as a public precaution. He was a vigilant guardian of the state; for the purse was never restored.

Onias looked at him, during his harangue, with a countenance between contempt and ridicule.

"I must go forward now," said he; "but, captain, see to your prisoner. He must answer

before the council to-morrow; and as you have so worthily disabled him from operations with the guard, your own head is answerable for his safe keeping." My enemy, to make all sure, himself saw me marched within the tower over the gate; comforted his soul by a parting promise that my time was come, and rode off with his Idumeans—to the boundless satisfaction of the scrupulous and much alarmed Jonathan.

The tower was massive; and there was no probability that any thing less than a Roman battering-ram would ever lay open its solid sides. The captain had recovered his virtue at the instant of my losing my purse; and I now could no more dream of sapping his integrity, than of sapping the huge blocks of the tower. Whether I was to be prisoner for the night or for the siege, or to glut the axe by morning, were questions which lay in the bosom of as implacable a villain, as long-delayed revenge ever made malignant; but what was to become of my child, of my family, of my share in the great cause, for which alone life was of value!

The chamber to which I was consigned was at the top of the tower, and overlooked a vast extent of country. Before me were the Roman camps seen clearly in the moon-light, and wrapt in silence, except when the solitary trumpet sounded the watch, or the heavy tread of a troop going its rounds was heard. The city sounds were but the murmurs of the sinking tide of the multitude. The Spring was in her glory. The air came fresh and sweet from the fields. All was tranquillity; yet what a mass of destructive power was lying motionless under that tranquillity! Fire, sword, and man, were before me; elements of evil that a touch could rouse into tempest, not to be allayed but by torrents of blood, and the ruin of empires.

CHAPTER XIV.

While my mind was wandering away in thoughts of the madness of ambition in so brief a being as man, I heard a loud clamour of voices in the chambers below. The rustic guard had been enjoying themselves; but their wine was already out, and they set their faces boldly against the discipline which pretended to limit the wine of patriots so true and thirsty. The clamour arose from the discovery that the cellars of the tower had been examined by a previous guard, who provided for the temperance of their successors, by taking the whole temptation to themselves. High words followed between the abettors of discipline and the parti-

sans of the bottle; and if my door were but unbarred, I might have expeditiously relieved the captain of his charge. But its bolts were enormous; and I tried lock and panel in vain.

As I was giving up the effort, a light footstep ascended the stairs; a key turned in the ponderous wards, and the minstrel of the tent stood before me.

"If you wish to escape from certain death," he whispered, "do as I bid you." He looked from the casement; sang a few notes; and, on being answered from without, pulled up a rope, which we hauled in together. The task was of some difficulty; but at length a weighty hamper appeared, loaded with wine. He took a portion of the contraband freight in his arms, and without a word disappeared. I heard his welcome proclaimed below with loud applause. Half the guard were instantly on the stairs to assist him down with the remainder, but against this he firmly protested; and threatened, in case of a single attempt to interfere with his operations, that he would awake the captain, and pub-

licly give back the keys of this incomparable private cellar to the legitimate hand. The threat was effective; the unlading of the hamper was left to his own dexterity; and at length but one solitary flask lay before us.

"You deserve some payment for your trouble," said he, with the careless and jovial air of his brethren. "Here's to your night's enterprise, whatever it be," pouring out a few drops and tasting them, while he forced a large draught upon me. "And now good night, my prince, unless you love the tower too much to take leave of this gallant guard by a window."

"But, boy, if you are detected in assisting my escape!"

"Oh! I have been detected in all sorts of frolics in my time, and yet here I am. The truth is, prince, I have travelled in your country, and have an old honour for your name. No later than to-day you gave me the handsomest present I have got since I came within the walls. I know the noble captain below stairs to be a thorough rogue; and the mighty Onias to want nothing for wickedness, but the

opportunity: in short, the thought occurred to me on seeing you, to ramble into the guard-house, help the honest revellers below to a little more wine than is good for their understandings; this contraband affair being a commodity in which, between ourselves, I deal; and further, break the laws by assisting you to leave captain, sentinels, persecutor, and all, behind.—Now, if you value your life, be the substitute for the empty flasks; get into this hamper, and make your way through the air like a bird. In two minutes I shall be safe enough. You need have no fears for me."

I coiled the rope round a beam, that my weight might not bring it down too suddenly; forced myself through the narrow window, and launched out into air, at a height of a hundred feet. But if I felt any distrust, it was brief. I was rapidly lowered down, passing the successive casements, in which I saw the successive watches of the guard drinking, sleeping, singing, and discussing public affairs with village rationality. Luckily no eye turned upon the fugitive; and the ground was touched at last.

In another moment the minstrel came, rather flying than sliding, down the rope. I said something in acknowledgment of this service. But he laid his finger on his lip, and pointing to the rampart, where a moving lamp showed that we were still within observation, led me through paths beset with thickets that no eye could penetrate, but, as he said, " that of a supplier of garrisons with contraband." But their intricacy offered no obstruction to this stripling; and after amusing himself with my perplexities, he led me to the verge of the plain.

" I have detained you," said he, " in these brambles, for the double purpose of avoiding the look-out from the battlements, and of giving the moon time to hide her blushing beauties." She lay reddening with the mists on the horizon. " She has been often called our mother; and, as children of the moon, the minstrels are allowed the privilege of keeping later hours, and being madder than the mob of mankind. But, like other children, we are sometimes engaged in matters which would dispense with the maternal eye; and to-night, between assisting the

Galileans to their wine, and cheating them of their prisoner, I wished that she was many a fathom below the ocean. "Mother," said he, throwing himself into an attitude, and pouring a gush of harmony from his little harp, "take a child's blessing, and begone." The words were spoken to a kind of tune, rambling, but singularly sweet. "Do you know," said he, with a sigh, as he turned and saw me gazing in admiration of his skill, "I am weary to death of my profession."

"Then, why not leave it? you are fit for better things; your accomplishments are of the very nature that make their way in society."

"Why not leave it? Oh; for a hundred reasons. In the first place, I should be more wearied of every other. I should be the bird in the cage, fed, sheltered, and possibly a favourite.—But what bird would not rather take the chance of the open air, even to be beat by the storms of summer, and frozen by the winter's chill? No; let me clap my pinions, and sing my song under the free canopy of the skies; or be voiceless, and wingless, and—dead."

"Boy, this is the natural language of your years. But the time must come when the spirit sinks, and man requires other charms in life than the power of roaming. The common change of nature which compels us in the days of sun-shine to provide for winter, is only a forewarning of the time when life shall require rest, an assured shelter, and the presence of human beings who feel an interest in us. The wanderer comes at last, a broken-hearted dependant, to solicit the alms of men who, without a spark of his genius, had the common sense to follow the track beaten for them by mankind."

He made no answer, but hung his head over the harp, and let his fingers stray among the strings. The moon's edge was now touching the mountains.

"We must be gone," said I; "but, as I insist on your not exposing yourself to further hazard, remember to look for me within a few days in Jerusalem. I owe you something for your night's service; which, if you are willing, shall be repaid by taking you into my house-

hold, should the siege be raised; if not, you are but as you were."

He was all nervous perturbation at the offer; wept, laughed, danced, rang a prelude upon the strings, kissed my hand, and finally bounded away before me. I called to him, repeating my wish that he should go no further.

"Impossible," said he; "you would be lost in a moment. If I had not crossed the ground hundreds of times, I should never be able to find my road. Half a mile forward, it is all rampart, trench, and ravine. You would be stopped by a myriad of sentinels. Why, nothing on earth could get to the foot of yonder hills, near as they seem, but an army,—or a minstrel."

Remonstrance was hopeless, for he ran on before me, and ran with a rapidity that tasked even my foot to follow. We soon came into the fortified ground, and I then felt his value. He led me over fosse and rampart, up the scarp and through the palisade, with the sagacity of instinct. But this was not all. I repeatedly saw the sentinels within a few feet of us, and

expected to be challenged every moment; but not a syllable was heard: I passed, with patrols of the legionary horse on either side of me; still, not a word. I walked through the rows of tents, in which the troops were up, and preparing for the duties of the morning. Not an eye fell upon me; and I almost began to believe myself, like a hero of the old fables, covered with a cloud.

The boy still continued racing along; until, on reaching the summit of a mound at some distance in front of me, he uttered a cry, and fell. I had heard no challenge; and conceiving that his fall was accidental, hurried towards him.

A flight of arrows whizzed over my head; and the black visages of a mob of Ethiopian riders came bouncing up a hollow beside me. It was not my purpose to fight, even if I had any hope of success against marksmen who could hit an elephant's eye. I called out for quarter in every language of which I was capable. But the Ethiopians only shook their woolly heads, laid hands on me, and began an

investigation of my riches, creditable to polished society. Barbarians, with a tongue and physiognomy worthy only of their kindred baboons, probed every plait of my garments, with an accuracy that could have been surpassed only in the most civilised custom-houses of the empire. A succession of shrieks, which I mistook for rage, but which were the mirth of those sons of darkness, were the prelude to measures which augured more formidable consequences than the rifling of a man who had already undergone rifling by a professor. A rope was thrown over my arms, and I was led towards the outposts. Yet even the neighbourhood of their Roman friends did not seem the most congenial to my captors. More than one consultation was held, in which their white teeth were bared to the jaw with rage, and their scimitars were whirled like so many flashes of lightning about each other's turbans, before they could decide, whether my throat was to be cut on the spot to get rid of an encumbrance, or they were to try how far the emptiness of

my purse might not be made up to them by the reward for the capture of a spy in the trappings of a chieftain.

I gave up remonstrance, where, if I had all the tongues of Babel, none of them seemed likely to answer my purpose ; and reserving the nice distinction between an ambassador and a spy for more cultivated ears, quietly walked onward in the midst of this ragged troop of thieves : the more insensible to honesty or argument, as they were thieves privileged according to law.

But our approach to the camp bred another difficulty. The troop felt an obvious disinclination to come too close to the legionaries. Whatever was the produce of their rovings, might be inquired into, and retained for the honour of justice and the benefit of its servants. Untutored as the negroes were, they had acquired a knowledge of the latitude of the official conscience; and bowed to the mastery of the white in plunder, as in the other accomplishments of an advanced age.

All could not venture to the camp; yet who was to be intrusted with the general interest,

so far as receiving the reward? The discussion was carried on chiefly by gesture, which sometimes proceeded to blows; and at last was wound up to such vigour, that a brawny ruffian, to preserve the peace, seized the rope, and dragging me out of the circle, began sharpening his scimitar on his knife, to cut my throat with the more certainty, and at once extinguish the controversy. But, at the instant, a horrid outcry arose; and a figure, hideous beyond conception, not a foot high, blacker than the blackest, and darting flames from its mouth, bounded in among us, mounted upon a wild beast of a horse, that kicked and tore at every thing. The Ethiopians shrieked with terror, and were scattered on all sides at the first shock; the ground was so cut up by the military operations, that they stumbled at every step; some were unhorsed; some lay desperately kicked and bitten; some probably had their necks broken; and others carried home the tale to spread it through the land of lions. I heard it long after, exciting the utmost amaze in a venerable circle sitting round one of the fountains of the Nile.

I was saved from being thus summarily made the victim of peace; but was as far as ever from freedom. While I was endeavouring to loose the rope, a patrol of the legionary horse came galloping from the camp; and I was taken, with this badge of a bad character upon me. But the flying negroes were the more amusing object. There was just light enough to see them running and rolling about the plain; turbans flying off in the air; and the few riders who could boast of keeping their seats, whirled away over brake and brier, at the mercy of their maddened horses. This display, which had been, at first, taken for the prelude to an assault on the lines, was now a source of pleasantry; and the horsemanship of the savages was honoured with many a roar.

My case came next under consideration. "I was found at the edge of the Roman intrenchments, where to be found was to die; I was besides taken with the mark of reprobation upon me." But I pleaded my own merits loudly, and appealed to the rope as evidence that I was not there by my own will. The legion-

aries were better soldiers than logicians, and my defence perplexed them: until some profounder one thought of inquiring, what brought me there at all. The troop flocked round to hear how I should rebut this overwhelming question. I mentioned my purpose in a few words.

The scale again turned in my favour, and I began to think victory secure; when a young Standard-bearer, who was probably destined to rise in the state, declared, with a splenetic tongue and brow of office, that "in this day of cheating, too much precaution could not be adopted against cheats of all colours; that the more plausible my story was, the more likely it was to be a fabrication; that I might have volunteered my captivity only to give weight to my fabrication; and that, finally, as my escape might do some kind of mischief, while my hanging could do none whatever, it was advisable—to hang me without delay."

The orator spoke the words of popularity; and my fate was sealed. But a new difficulty arose. By whom was the sentence to be put in

execution; for the duty would have sullied the legionary honour for life. The demur was perplexing; but the dignity of the cavalry must at all events be preserved. A trampled African, who lay groaning in a ditch beside me, caught the sound of the debate, dragged himself out, and offered, mangled as he was, to perform the office for any sum that their generosity might think proper. Never was man nearer paying the grand debt, than I was at that moment. The African recovered his vigour as by magic; and the young statesman took upon himself the superintendance of this service to his country. I was not idle, and raised my voice against this violence to a "negociator;" but the troopers of the Imperial horse had been roused from their sleep on my account, and they were not to return, liable to the ridicule of having been roused by a false alarm. While I still endeavoured to put off the evil hour, the trampling of a large body of cavalry was heard. "The General!" exclaimed the young officer, who evidently had an instinctive sensibility to the approach of rank.

"Let Titus come," said I, "or any man of honour, and *he* will understand me." I tore the badge of disgrace from my arms, and stepped forward to meet the great son of Vespasian. My look of confidence alarmed the troop, and the Standard-bearer made way for a man who dared to speak to the heir of the throne. But the general was not Titus: a broad, brutal countenance, red with excess, glared haughtily round. I caught his eye, and he suddenly turned pale: a whisper from one of the officers put him in possession of the circumstances, and he rode up to me. "So, rebel! you are come to this at last. You have been taken in the fact, and must undergo your natural fate."

"I demand to be led to your general. I scorn to defend myself before inferiors."

"Inferiors!" he bit his livid lip. "Traitor, you are not now on the hill of Scopas, at the head of an army."

I recognised Cestius. "Nor you," said I, "on the plain, at the head of an army; and so much the more fortunate for both you and them.—But, I scorn to talk to men whose backs

I have seen. Lead me to your master, fugitive!"

The troops, unaccustomed to this plain speaking in presence of the tyrant of the legions, looked on with wonder. Cestius himself was staggered; but the nature of the man soon returned; and in a voice of fury, he ordered a body of Arab archers, who were seen moving at a distance, to be brought up for the extinction of a "traitor unworthy of a Roman sword."

The Arabs, exhilarated at the prospect of reward, came up shouting, tossing their lances, and shooting their arrows. As a last resource, I solemnly protested against this murder, which I pronounced to be the work of a revenge disgraceful to the name of soldier; and, taunting Cestius with his defeat, demanded that, if he doubted my honour, he should try, on the spot, which of our swords was the better.

He answered my taunt only by a glare of rage, and a gesture to the archers; who instantly threw themselves into a half circle round me, with the expertness of proficients in the trade of justice, and bended their bows. I was de-

termined to resist to the last; and flung out upbraidings and scorn upon the murderer, which drove him to hide his head behind the troops; when another disturbance arose. Scimitars waved, turbans shook, horses plunged; the deep order was broken; and at length a horseman, magnificently apparelled and mounted, burst into the ring, and rushed fiercely round.

"What, you miscreants," he shouted, "what in the name of Beelzebub is all this for? who dares to take the command out of my hands? down with your bows.—Commit murder; and I not present! The first man that pulls a string shall leave an empty saddle. Draw off, cut-throats; or, if you want to do the world a service, shoot one another."

I gazed in vain on this figure of cloth of gold and purple. The turban that blazing with gems hung down on his forehead, and the beard that black as the raven's wing curled full round his lip, completely baffled me. He looked at me in turn, thrust out a sinewy hand, and, clasping mine, exclaimed with a loud laugh—

"What, prince, does the plumage make you

forget the bird? What can have brought you into the hands of my culprits? I thought that you were drowned, burned, or a candidate for the imperial diadem, by this time."

The voice and manner recurred to me. "My friend of the free trade!" said I.

"By no means. But a loyal plunderer—in the service of Vespasian, and in command of a thousand Arab cavalry, that will ride, run away, and rob, with any corps in the service; and the word is a bold one."

Our brief conference was broken up by the return of Cestius, who, outrageous at the delay, and coming to inquire the cause, found fresh fuel for his wrath in the sight of the Arab captain turned into my protector. With an execration he demanded why his orders had been disobeyed. The captain answered with the most provoking coolness, that "no Roman officer, let his rank be what it might, was entitled to degrade the allies into executioners." The Roman grew furious with the slight in the face of the troops, who highly enjoyed it. The

Arab grew more sarcastic; till Cestius was rash enough to lift his hand, and the Arab anticipated the blow by dashing his charger at him, and leaving the haughty general and his horse struggling together on the ground.

An insult of this kind to the second in command was, of course, not to be forgiven. The Arabs bent their bows to make battle for their captain, but he forbade resistance; and when the legionary tribune demanded his sword, he surrendered it with a smile, saying, that "he had done service enough for one day, in saving an honest man, and punishing a ruffian," and that he should justify himself to Titus alone.

My fate was still undetermined. But the legionaries soon had more pressing matters to think of. The clangour of horns and loud shouts came in the direction of the city. The plain still lay in shade; but I could see through the dusk immense crowds moving forward like an inundation. The legions were instantly under arms, and I stood a chance of being walked over by two armies.

But I was not to encounter so distinguished a catastrophe. Some symptoms of my inclination to escape attracted the eye of the guard, and I was marched to the common repository of malefactors in the rear of the lines.

CHAPTER XV.

My new quarters were within the walls of one of those huge country mansions, which the pride of our ancestors had built to be the plague of their posterity; for those the enemy chiefly employed for our prisons. Their prodigious strength defied desultory attack; time made little other impression on them than to picture their walls with innumerable stains; and the man must be a practised prison-breaker who could force his way out of their depths of marble.

But if my eyes were useless, my ears had their full indulgence. Every sound of the conflict was heard. The attack was frequently

furious, and must have been close to the walls of my dungeon. The various rallying cries of the tribes rang through its cells; then a Roman shout and the heavy charge of the cavalry would roll along, till, after an encountering roar and a long clashing of weapons, the tumult passed wild away, to be rapidly renewed by the obstinate bravery of my unfortunate countrymen.

I felt as a man and a leader must feel, during scenes in which he ought to take a part, yet to which he was virtually as much dead as the sleeper in the tomb. My life had been activity; my heart was in the cause; I had knowledge, zeal, and strength, that might in the chances of battle turn defeat into triumph. My name was known; I heard it often among the charging cries of the day. But here I lay within impassable barriers. A thousand times during those miserable hours I measured their height with my eye, and longed for the hopeless vigour that could scale them; then threw myself on the ground, and, closing my ears with my hands, laboured to exclude thought from my soul.

But my fellow-prisoners were practical philosophers to a man; untaught in the schools, 'tis true, yet fully trained in that great academe, worth all that Plato ever dreamed in—experience.

In my wanderings through mankind, I never before had such an opportunity of studying variety of character. War is the hot-bed that urges all our qualities, good and evil, into their broadest luxuriance. The generous become munificent, the mean turn into the villanous, and the rude harden into brutality. The camp is the great inn, at which all the dubious qualities set up their rest; and a single campaign perfects the culprit to the height of his profession. There were round me in these immense halls about five hundred profligates, any one of whose histories would have been invaluable to a scorner of human nature.

Among the loose armies of the East those fellows exercised their vocation as regular appendages; often lived in luxury, and sometimes shot up into leaders themselves. But the approach to the Roman armies required a master-

hand. The temptation was strong, for the legionary was the grand ravager: war was always busy where he trod; and, like the lion, he left the larger share of the prey to the jackall. But justice, inexorable and rapid, was his rule, in all cases but his own; and the jackall suspected of trespassing beyond the legitimate distance from the superior savage, ran the most imminent hazard of being disqualified for all encroachments to come. Three-fourths of my associates had played this perilous game, and its penalties were now awaiting only the first leisure of the troops. Peace, at all times vexatious to their trade, had thus a double disgust for them; and the most patriotic son of Israel could not have taken a more zealous interest in the defeat of the legions. But philosophy still predominated, and when the retiring sounds showed the repulse of the tribes, not a countenance was the darker; if hope was at an end, hilarity took its place, and the prison rang with the most reckless exhibitions of practical glee, riotous songs, and fierce mockeries at the power of rods and axes. The professional talents of those

sons of chance were remorselessly displayed. The mimic collected his audience, burlesqued the pompous tribunes and officials of the army, and gathered his pence and plaudits, as if he was under the open sky, and could call his head his own. The nostrum-vender had his secrets for the cure of every ill, and harangued on the impotence of brand, scourge, and blade; where the patient had but the wisdom to employ his irresistible unguent. The soothsayer sold fate at the lowest price, and fixed the casualties of the next four-and-twenty hours; an easy task with the principal part of his audience. The minstrel chanted the honour and glory of a life unencumbered by care or conscience. And the pilferer, with but an hour to live, exercised his trade with an industry proportioned to the shortness of his time.

In the whole gang I met with but one man thoroughly out of spirits. He had obviously been no favourite of fortune, for the human form could scarcely be less indebted to clothing. His swarthy visage was doubly blackened by hunger and exhaustion, and even his voice had

a prison sound. Driven away from the joyous groups by the natural repulsion which the careless feel for visages that remind them of the world's troubles, he took refuge in the corner where I lay, tormented by every echo of the battle.

His groans attracted my notice, and, not unwilling to forget the melancholy and agitating scenes, in which every moment was draining the last hope of my country, I turned to the wretch beside me, and asked the cause of his sorrows.

"Ingratitude," was the reply. "This is a villanous world; a man may spend his life in serving others; and what will he gain in the end? Nothing. There is, for instance, the prince of Damascus, wallowing in wealth; yet the greatest rogue under this roof has not a more pitiful stock of honour; witness his conduct to me. He was out of favour with his uncle, the late prince; was not worth more than the raiment on his limbs; and as likely to finish his days on the gibbet as any of the knot of robbers that helped him to scour the roads

about Sidon. In his distress he applied to me. I had driven a handsome smuggling trade between Egypt and the north, and now and then gave him a handsome price for his booty. The idea of bringing his uncle to a compromise was out of the question. The attempt would have probably first brought ourselves to the axe. I gave in my proposal, and named my price; it was allowed to be fair. I made my way into the palace, became a favourite, by giving up some of my old friends of the troop; was exalted to the honours of cup-bearer; and, on my first night of office, gave the old man a cup which cured him of drunkenness for ever. And what, do you think, was my reward?"

"I think I could name what it ought to have been."

"You conclude, half his heir's jewels and treasure, at the least:—No; not a stone, not a shekel. I was thrown into chains, and finally kicked out of the city, with a promise, the only one that he will ever keep, that if I venture into his sacred presence again, I shall leave it with-

out my head. There's a villain for you! There's gratitude! He will never do good as long as he lives!"

"That may still depend upon your assistance. Return to him, and give him the opportunity."

"My next example was among the Romans. It must be owned that they pay well for secret services. But then, ingratitude infects them from top to toe. I had been three years in their employment; and, if I made free with a few of their secrets in favour of others, it was only on the commercial principle of having as many customers as one can supply; still I helped them to the knowledge of all that was going on.

"At last a showy adventurer changed the scene of my labours. Some insult from the prefect stirred up his blood, and in revenge he sailed away with his galley, and set up on his own account. The prefect had reason to regret the quarrel; for not a sail, from a shallop to a trireme, could touch the water from the Cyclades to Cyprus, without being

overhauled by the captain. I was set upon his track, and got into his good graces by lending him a little of my information; of which he made such desperate use, that the prefect swore my destruction as a traitor. To make up the quarrel, I tried a wider game, and was bringing the Roman fleet upon the pirates in their very nest, when a whole course of ill luck came across me. A pair whom, to the last hour of my life, nothing will persuade me to think any thing but demons sent expressly to do me mischief, broke up one of the finest inventions that ever came into the head of man.

"The consequence was, that the pirates, instead of being attacked, burned the prefect's bed under him, and would have burned himself, if he had not thought a watery end better than a fiery one, leaped overboard, and gone straight to the bottom. The whole blame fell upon me; and my only payment from the Romans was the cropping of my ears, and a declaration, sworn to in the names of Romulus and Remus, that if I ever ventured again within a Roman camp or city, I should not get off so well.

There's ingratitude for you; never was man so unfortunate."

"Quite the contrary; it appears to me, that seldom was man so lucky. If not one in a hundred would have your tale to tell, not one in a thousand would have lived to tell it." I had already recognised the Egyptian of the cavern.

"But gratitude, humanity, justice."

"Say no more about them. Or, if any libeller of your masters start up, tell your story and confute him. Whatever the Romans may be in the matter of justice, your case is an answer to all charges on their mercy."

He looked at me with a ghastly grimace, and, as he threw back the long and squalid locks that covered his countenance, showed what beggary had done to the sleek features of the once superbly clothed and jewelled sea-rover. "But what," said I, "threw a man of your virtue among such a gang of caitiffs as are here?"

"Another instance of ingratitude. I had been for twenty years connected with one of the leading men of Jerusalem, and I will say, that in my experience of mankind, I have known no

individual less perplexed with any weakness of conscience. He had a difficult game to play; between the Romans, whom he served privately, the Jews, whom he served publicly, and himself, whom he served with at least as much zeal as either of his employers. The times were made for the success of a man who has his eyes open, and suffers neither the fear of any thing on earth, nor the hope of any thing after it, to shut them. He succeeded accordingly: got rid of some rivals by the dagger; sent some to harangue in the dungeon; bribed, where money would answer his purpose; menaced, where threats would be current coin; and, by the practice of those natural means of rising in public affairs, became the hope of a faction. But on his glory there was one cloud —the prince of Naphtali!"

I listened, all ear. I had deeply known the early hostility of Onias; but his devices were too tortuous for me to trace, and, till the past night, I had lost sight of him for years. I asked what cause of bitterness existed between those personages.

"A multitude; as generally happens, where the imagination becomes a party, and the accuser is allowed to be the judge. The prince, in youth, and before he attained his rank, had the insolence to fall in love with the woman marked by Onias for his own. He had the additional insolence to attract her, and the completion of his crimes was marriage. Onias swore his ruin thenceforth. Public convulsions put off the promise; and while he was driven to his last struggle to keep himself among the living, he had the indulgence of seeing the young husband shoot up without any trouble into rank, wealth, and renown."

"But has not time blunted his hostility?"

"Time, as the proverb goes, blunts nothing but a man's wit, his teeth, and his good intentions," said the knave, with a sneer on his grim visage. "The next half is, that it sharpens wine, women, and wickedness. What Onias may have been doing of late, I can only guess; but, unless he is changed by miracle, he has been dealing in every villanous contrivance

from subornation to sorcery. I had my own affairs to mind. But, unless Satan owes him a grudge, he is now not far from his revenge."

I thought of our meeting at the city gates; and, alarmed at the chance of his discovering my family, asked, whether Onias had obtained any late knowledge of his rival.

"Of that I know but little," said he; "yet, quick as his revenge may be, unless my honest employer manages with more temper than usual, he will rue the hour when he set foot on the track of the prince of Naphtali. If ever man possessed the mastery of the spirits that our wizards pretend to raise, the prince is that man. I myself have hunted him for years; yet he always baffled me. I have laid traps for him that nothing in human cunning could have escaped; yet he broke through them, as if they were spiders' webs. I lured him by his domestics into the hands of the Romans; and saw him sent to the thirstiest lover of blood that ever sat on a throne. Yet he came back; aye, came from the very clutch of Nero. I mad-

dened his friends against him; and he contrived to escape even from the malice and madness of his friends: a matter which, you will own, is among the most memorable. I had him plunged into a dungeon; where I kept him alive, for certain reasons, while Onias was to be kept to his bargain by the prisoner's reappearance. Yet he escaped; and my last intelligence of him is, that this master of fate and fortune is at this moment living in pomp in Jerusalem, the spot where I have been for the last month in close pursuit of him. Time, or some marvellous power, must have disguised him. And yet, if I were to meet the man this night—."

"Look on me, slave!" I rose, and, grasping him by the throat, unsheathed my dagger. "You have found him, and to your cost. Atrocious villain; it is to you, then, that I owe so much misery. Make your peace with Heaven, if you can; for it would be a crime to suffer you to leave this spot alive."

He was dumb with terror. I held him with an iron grasp. The thought that if he escaped me, it must be only to let loose a murderer

against my house, made me feel his death an act of justice.

"Let me go," he at last muttered; "let me live; I am not fit to die. In the name of that Lord whom you worship, spare me." He fell at my feet, in desperate and howling supplication.—"You have not heard all; I have abjured your enemy. Spare me, and I will swear to pass my days in the desert, a wanderer; never to come again before the face of man; to lie upon the rock—to live upon the weed—to drink of the pool—to macerate this miserable body, until I sink into the grave!"

I paused, struck by the abject eagerness for life in a wretch self-condemned, and whose life was ready to be thus vowed to misery. While I held the dagger glittering before him, his senses continued bound up by fear. He gazed on it with an eye that quivered with every quivering of the steel. With one hand he grasped my uplifted arm as he knelt, and with the other gathered his rags round his throat to cover it from the blow. His voice was lost in horrid gaspings; his mouth was wide

open and livid; the hair of his head started up, and writhed with the deadly writhing of his features. I sheathed the weapon, and his countenance instantly returned into its old hollow grimace. A ghastly smile grew upon it, as he drew from his bosom a small packet.

"If you had put me to death," said the wretch, "you would have lost your best friend. This packet contains a correspondence for which Onias would give all that he is worth in the world; and well he might; for the man who has it in his hands, has his life. The world is made up of ingratitude. After all my services, slandering here, plundering there, hunting down his opponents in every direction, till they either put themselves out of the world, or he saved them the trouble; he had the baseness to throw me off. At the head of his troops; when he felt himself secure, he flung me into scorn; he kicked me from his horse's side; nay, ordered me to be turned loose, as he said, "to carry my treachery to the Romans, if they should be fools enough to think me worth the hire." I was watching my opportunity to enter Jerusa-

lem, and stab him to the heart; when I was taken by some of the plunderers that hover round the camp; was recognised as having done some things in my time too ingenious for vulgar conceptions; and am probably to suffer, for the benefit of Roman morality, as a robber and assassin, as soon as the legions shall have murdered every man, and robbed every house in Jerusalem."

The packet contained a close correspondence of Onias with the Roman authorities. A sensation of triumph glowed through me,—I held the fate of my implacable enemy in my hand. I could now with a word strike to the earth the being whose artifices and cruelties had waylaid me through life; the traitor to my country would perish by the same blow that avenged my own wrongs. "The last hours of his culprit existence should be hours of that solemn and self-acknowledged retribution, which seals the triumph of justice!"

My nature was made for violent passions. In love and hatred, in ambition, in scorn, in revenge, my original spirit knew no bounds.

Time, sorrow, and the conviction of my own outcast state, softened those powerful and hazardous impulses, and I found the value of adversity. Misfortune comes with healing on its wings to the burning temper of the heart, as the tempest comes to the arid soil.—It tears up the surface, but softens it for the seeds of the nobler virtues; in even its feeblest work, it cools the withering and devouring heat for a time. I had yet to find with what fatal rapidity the heart resumes its old, overwhelming passions.

"I spare your life;" said I, "but on one condition.—That you henceforth make Onias the perpetual object of your vigilance; that you keep him from injury to me and mine; and that, when I shall seize him at last, you shall be forthcoming to give public proof of his treachery."

"This sounds well," said the Egyptian, as he cast his eyes round the lofty hall. "But it would sound better, if we were not on this side of the gate. All the talking in the world will not lower those walls an inch, nor make that gate turn on its hinges; though for that, and

for every other too, there is one master-key. Happy was the time," and the fellow's sullen eye lighted up with the joy of knavery, " when I could walk through every cabinet, closet, and cell, from the emperor's palace in Rome down to the emperor's dungeon in Cesarea."

I produced a few coins, which I had contrived to conceal; and flung them into his clutch. The sum rekindled life in him; avarice has its enthusiasts, as well as superstition. He forgot danger, prison, and even my dagger, in the sight of his idol. He turned the coins to the light in all possible ways; he tried them with his teeth; he tasted, he kissed, he pressed them to his bosom. Never was lover at the feet of his mistress more rapturous, than this last of human beings, at the touch of money in the midst of wretchedness and ruin, with the chance of immediate death, and the certainty of desperate and solitary hazard, even if he should escape. His transports taught me a lesson; and in that prison and from that slave of vice, I learned long to tremble at the power of gold over the human mind.

It was past midnight, and the noise of the criminals round me had already sunk away. The floor was strewed with sleepers, and the only waking figure was the sentinel as he trod wearily along the passages; when the Egyptian, desiring me to feign sleep, that his further operations might not be embarrassed, drew himself along the ground towards him. The soldier, a huge German covered with beard and iron, and going his rounds with the insensibility of a machine, all but trod upon the Egyptian, who lay crouching and writhing before him. I saw the spear lifted up, and heard a growl that made me think my envoy's career completely at an end in this world. He still lay on the ground, writhing under the German's foot, as a serpent might under the paw of a lion.

I was about to spring up, and interpose; but his time was not yet come. The spear hung in air, gradually turned its point upwards, and finally resumed its seat of peace on the German's shoulder. That art of persuasion which speaks to the palm, and whose language is of

all nations, had touched the son of Woden; I heard the sound of the coin on the marble; a few words arranged the details: the sentinel discovered that his vigilance was required in another direction; broke off his customary round, and walked away. The Egyptian turned to me with a triumphant smile on his villanous visage; the gate rolled on its hinge, and he slipped through like a shadow.

On the instant, my mind misgave me. I had put the fate of my family into the hands of a slave, destitute of even the pretence of principle. In my eagerness to save, might I not have been delivering them up to their enemy? He had sold Onias to me; might he not make his peace by selling me to Onias? The gate was still open. The sentinel was gone to a distant part of the building. A few steps would put me beyond bondage.

Yet, I had come to recover Esther. If I left the camp, what hope was there of my ever seeing this child of my heart again? How could I enjoy liberty, while I thought that she was in Roman hands? would not every hour of my life

be embittered by the chance that she might be suffering the miseries of a dungeon, or be borne away from every being that she loved, into a strange land? or dying, and calling on me for help in vain!

Those contending impulses passed through my mind with the speed, and almost with the agony, of an arrow. But the more I thought of the Egyptian, the more I took his treachery for certain. The present ruin of all predominated over the possible sufferings of one; and with a heart throbbing almost to suffocation, and a step scarcely able to move, I dragged myself towards the portal.

CHAPTER XVI.

But I was not to escape, and anticipate the traitor. As I touched the threshold, a loud sound of trampling feet and many voices drove me back. By that curious texture of the feelings which prefers suffering to suspense, I was almost glad to have the question decided for me by fortune, and flung myself on the ground among a heap of the undone, who lay enjoying a slumber that might be envied by princes.

The gate was thrown open, and in burst a living mass of horror,—a multitude of beings in whom the human face and form were almost obliterated; shapes gaunt with famine, black with dust, withered with deadly fatigue, and covered with gashes and gore.

The war had gone on from cruelty to cruelty. To the Roman the Jew was a rebel, and he received a rebel's treatment; to the Jew the Roman was a tyrant, and dearly was the price of his tyranny exacted. Quarter was seldom given on either side. The natural generosity of the son of Vespasian attempted for a while to soften the rigours of this furious system. But the slaughter of the mission exasperated him; he declared the Jews a people incapable of faith, and proclaimed a war of extermination.

The battle of the day had furnished the first opportunity of formal vengeance. The people, stimulated by the arrival and ambition of Onias, had made a desperate effort to force the Roman lines. The attacks were reiterated with more than valour, with rage and madness; the Jews fought with a disregard of life that appalled and had nearly overwhelmed even the Roman steadiness. The loss of the legions was formidable; all their chief officers were wounded, many were killed. Titus himself, leading a column from the Decuman gate, was wounded by a blow from a sling; and the state of the

ramparts, as I saw them at day-break, torn down in immense breaches, and filling up the ditch with their ruins, showed the imminent hazard of the whole army. Another hour of light would probably have been its ruin. But Judea would not have been the more secure; for the factions, relieved from the presence of an enemy, would have torn each other to pieces.

The loss of the Jews was so prodigious, as to be accounted for only by their eagerness to throw away life. Not less than a hundred thousand corpses lay between the camp and Jerusalem. No prisoners were taken; and the crowd that now approached were the wounded, gathered off the field, to be crucified in atonement to the memory of the mission.

The coming of those victims put an end to the possibility or the desire of sleep. The immense and gloomy hall, one of those in use for the stately banquets, customary among the leaders of Jerusalem, was suddenly a blaze of torches. The malefactors and captives were thrown together in heaps, guarded by a strong

detachment of spearmen, that lined the sides, like ranges of iron statues overlooking the mixed and moving confusion of wretched life between. Guilt, sorrow, and shame, were there in their dreadful undisguise. The roof rang to oaths and screams of pain, as the wounded tossed and rolled upon each other; to bitter lamentation, and more bitter still, to those self-accusing outcries that the near approach of violent death sometimes furiously awakens in the most daring criminals. For, stern as the justice was, it still was justice; the Jewish character had fearfully changed. Rapine and bloodshed had become the habits of the populace. And among the panting and quivering wretches before me, begging a moment of life, I recognised many a face, that seen in Jerusalem was the sign of plunder and massacre.

Repulsive as my recollections were, I spent the greater part of the night in bandaging their wounds, and relieving the thirst, which scarcely less than their wounds, wrung them. There were women too among those wrecks of the sword; and now that the frenzy of the day

was passed, they exhibited a picture of the most heart-breaking dejection.

Lying on the ground, with mutilated limbs and every lineament of their former selves disfigured, they cried from that living grave alternately for vengeance and for mercy. Then, tearing their hair, and flinging it as their last mark of hatred and scorn at the legionaries, they devoted them to ruin in the name of the God of Israel. Then passion would give way to pain or a sense of ruin, and in floods of tears they called on the names of parent, husband, and child, whom they were to see no more.

It was known that, at day-break the prisoners were to die; and the din of hammers, and the creaking of waggons bearing the crosses, broke the night with horrid intimation. At length, the stillness terribly told that all was prepared. The night, measured by moments, seemed endless, and many a longing was uttered for the dawn that was to put them out of their misery. Yet when the first gray light fell through the casements, and the trumpet sounded for the escort to get under arms, nothing could

exceed the fury and despair of the crowd. Some rushed upon the spears of the reluctant soldiery; some bounded in mad antics through the hall; others fell on their knees, and offered up horrid and shuddering prayers; many flung themselves upon the floor, and in the paroxysm of wrath and fear perished.

Shocked and sickened by this misery, I withdrew from the gate, where the tumult was thickest, as the soldiery were already driving them out; and returned to my old lair to await the stroke that was to fall upon myself. But I found it occupied. A circle were standing round a speaker, to whom they listened with singular attention. The voice caught my ear; from the crowd round him I was unable to observe his features; but, once drawn within the sound of his words, I shared the general interest in their extraordinary power. He was a preacher of the new religion.

In my wanderings through Judea, it must be supposed that, I had often met with those Nazarenes. Their doctrines had a vivid simplicity that might have attracted my attention

as a philosopher; but the delight of philosophy was cold to their power. The splendour and strength of their preaching realised the boldest traditions of oratory. Yet their triumph was not that of oratory. They disclaimed all pretension to eloquence or literature; declaring, that even if they possessed them, they dared not sully by human instruments of success the glory due to Heaven. They carried this self-denial to the singular extent of divulging every circumstance calculated to deprive themselves and their doctrines of human distinction. They openly acknowledged that they were of humble birth and occupation, unlearned, sinners like the rest of mankind, and in some instances, guilty of former excesses of blind zeal, bigots, and persecutors of the new religion even to blood.

Of their Master they spoke with the same openness. They told of his humble origin, his career of unpopularity and rejection, and his death by the punishment of a slave. To the scoffer at their hopes of a kingdom to be given by the sufferer of that ignominious death,

they unhesitatingly answered, that their hope was founded expressly upon his cross; and that they lived and rejoiced in the expectation that they were to seal their faith with their blood.

I had often seen enthusiasm among my countrymen; but this was a spirit of a distinct and loftier birth. It had the vigour of enthusiasm without its rashness; the innocence of infancy with the wisdom of years; the solemn reverence of the Jew for the divine will, free from his jealous and exclusive claim to the possession of the truth. The law and the prophets were perpetually in their hands; and they perpetually embarrassed our indolent doctors and acrid pharisees with questions and interpretations, to which no reply could be returned but a sneer or an anathema.

But, in the power of conviction, in the master art of striking through heart and understanding with sudden light, like the bolt from Heaven, I never heard, I never shall hear, their equals. To call it eloquence, was to humiliate this stupendous gift; the most practised skill of

the rhetorician gave way before it like gossamer, like chaff before the whirlwind. It broke its way through sophistry by the mere weight of thought. It had a rapid abundance and reality that swept the hearer along. In its disdain of the mere decorations of speech, in the bold and naked nerve of its language, which the sickly sophist called uncouthness, there was an irresistible energy—the energy of the tempest, giving proof in its untameable and irregular rushings, of its descent from a region beyond the reach of man. I never listened to one of these preachers, but with the consciousness that he was the depository of mighty knowledge. He had the whole mystery of the human affections bare to his eye. Among a thousand hearts one word sent conviction at the same instant. All their diversities of feeling, sorrow, and error, were shaken at once by that universal language.—It talked to the soul! Of those overwhelming appeals, which often lasted for hours together, and to which I listened overwhelmed, nothing is left to posterity, but a few fragments, and those letters which the Christians still preserve among their

sacred writings,—great productions, and giving all the impression that it is possible to transmit to the future. But, the living voice, the illumined countenance, the frame glowing and instinct with inspiration!—what can transmit them?

"Here," said I, as I often stood and heard their voices thundering over the multitude, "here is the true power that is to shake the temples of heathenism. Here is a new element, come to overthrow, or renovate the world." I saw our holy law struggling to keep itself in existence, compressed on every side by idolatry; a little fountain feebly urging its way through its native rocks, but exhausted and dried up the moment it reached the plain. But here was an ocean, an inexhaustible depth and breadth of power, made to roll round the world, and be, at the will of Providence, the illimitable instrument of its bounty. I saw our holy law feebly sheltering under its despoiled and insulted ordinances the truth of Heaven. But here was a religion scorning a narrower temple than the earth and the heaven!

Yet I turned away from those convictions. A thousand times, I was on the point of throwing myself at the feet of the men who bore this transcendent gift, and asking, "What shall I do to be saved?" A thousand times I could have cried out, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." But my doubting heart! I make no attempt to account for myself, or my career;—I have felt as strongly drawn back, as if there was an actual hand forcing me away.—The illusion was a willing one, and it was suffered, like all such, to hold me in its captivity.—But, even when I walked away, I have said, "Whence had those men this knowledge? If angels from God were to come down to reclaim the world, could they tell us things different, or tell us more?"

I looked round upon the labours of ancient wisdom, and I saw how trivial a space its utmost vigour cleared, and how soon even that space was overrun by the rankness of the world; and I said, Here is the central fire, the mighty reservoir of light, awaiting but the divine command to burst up in splendour, consume the impurities

of the world at once, and regenerate mankind."

But the veil was upon my face. I laboured against conviction; and, shutting out the subject from my thoughts, sternly determined to live and die in the faith of my fathers.

I heard but the few and simple closing words of the speaker in this group of the devoted. He was sorrowful that the gospel had been so long committed to his hands in vain. He had, through fear of his own inadequacy to the task of converting his brethren, and in remaining deference to their prejudices, suffered the truth to decay; and seen the illustrious labours of the apostles, without following their example. "But," said he, "I was rebuked; the opportunity once neglected, was refused even to my prayers. I was thenceforth in perils, in civil war, in domestic sedition. I am but now come from a dungeon. But, in my bonds, it pleased him in whose hand are the corners of the heavens to visit me. I knelt and prayed, acknowledging my sin, and beseeching him by the mercies of the Lord, that before I

I died, might proclaim his holy truth before Israel. In that hour, came a voice bidding me go forth; and, lo! my chains fell from my hands, and I went forth. And when I came to the gates of the dungeon, I willed to go forward to the city of David. But I was forbidden; and my steps were turned here to awake my brethren to knowledge, before they perish."

The trumpets rang again, as a new crowd were drained off to execution. My heart sank at the melancholy sound. But among the converts there was not a murmur. "Kneel," said the preacher; "the hour is come. Let us give thanks unto the Lord." They knelt, and he poured out his spirit aloud in prayer.

"Now go forth," he said, rising alone; "go forth, redeemed of the Lord. This night have ye known that he is gracious. Those things that God before hath showed by the mouth of all his prophets that Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled. But ye have heard, but ye have been converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. But ye

have been called—but ye have been justified—but ye shall be glorified. Our hope of you is steadfast; knowing that as you have been partakers of his cross, so shall ye be of his kingdom. Now be grace unto you, and peace from the Lord."

He laid his hands upon the kneeling martyrs, and went slowly round, blessing them. His face had been hitherto turned from me; and I was too much impressed by his words, and the awful circumstances in which he stood, to even conjecture who he was. But in moving round, he came before me. To my inexpressible surprise and alarm, the teacher was Eleazar. I had lost every trace of him since we parted in the fortress; and with sorrow of heart, had concluded him a sacrifice to the common atrocities practised in our ferocious war.

His long absence was now explained. But no explanation could account for the extraordinary change that had been wrought upon his countenance and mind. Always generous and manly, the softness of a nature made for domestic life had concealed the vigour of his un-

derstanding. He was the general reconciler in the disputes of the neighbouring districts—the impartial judge—the unwearied friend; and his features wore the stamp of this quiet career. But the man before me bore uncontrollable energy in every tone and feature. The failing flame of the torch that burned over his head, was enough to show the transformation of his countenance into force and grandeur; his glance was a living fire: the hair that floated over it, changed by captivity to the whiteness of snow, shaded a forehead that seemed to have suddenly expanded into majesty. If I had met with such a man in a desert, I should have augured in him the founder, or the subverter of a throne.

While I stood absolutely awed by his presence, the gates were thrown open, and a strong detachment of spearmen poured in to gather up the gleanings of the hall. Then was renewed the scene of misery. The prisoners struggled furiously against the horrid death that was now certain. Their rage and imprecations were answered by the blows and curses of the sol-

diery. Wretches, that I had thought dead, started from the ground, and flung themselves at their feet; or rushed against the armed ranks, tore the weapons out of their hands, and broke them in mad triumph through the hall; or turned them against the shields and cuirasses with the force of frenzy. Others dashed their foreheads against the walls and floor, and died upon the spot. Others sprang up the projections of the sculpture, and climbed with the agility of leopards to the roof to force the casements. But additional troops poured in; and the crowd were overwhelmed, and driven out to undergo their destiny.

During this long tumult the Christian converts continued kneeling, and evidently absorbed by thoughts that extinguished fear. Even the sounds from without, that terribly told what was going on, and every tone of which pierced me to the marrow, produced only a deeper supplication that light would be given to the souls of the sufferers. This patience probably induced the soldiery to leave them to the last, while they drove out the more un-

tractable at the point of the spear, like cattle to the slaughter. I still stood aloof. The sacredness of the moments that came before death were not to be interrupted. The transformed Eleazar had already passed away from the things of this world. I would not force them on him again, nor vainly and cruelly disturb the holy serenity of one at peace alike with man and Heaven. At length the order came. "Now, my beloved brothers, beloved in the Lord, go forth," said Eleazar, with a noble exultation glowing in his countenance. "Quit ye like men; be strong: fear not them who can kill only the body. Even this night saw you still in your sins—the wisdom that was before all worlds, hidden from you—without a Saviour. But he that calleth light out of darkness, hath wrought in you. The ear of the Lord has not been heavy, that he should not hear; his hand has not been straitened. He has poured upon you that Spirit which is an earnest of your inheritance, holy, incorruptible, eternal in the heavens. Now, sons of Abraham, redeemed of Christ, kings and priests of God for ever; go, where

he is gone to prepare a place for you. Go, to the house of many mansions. Go, to the kingdom of glory."

With tears and blessings, Eleazar took water, and baptized the converts. They sang a hymn, and then rising, moved towards the gate; the soldiers standing at a distance, and looking on at this more than heroic resignation with eyes of respect and wonder. But I could restrain myself no longer. I stopped Eleazar: he instantly recognised me; and the colour that shot through his cheek showed that with me came a tide of memory. I was speechless; I embraced him: tears of old friendship dimmed my eyes. He was overpowered like myself; and could only exclaim—" Salathiel; my brother,—what misfortune has brought you here?—But you are not to die?—Where is Miriam,—where are your children?—You cannot be a prisoner?—Fly from this dreadful place."

" Never, my brother; unless I can save you.—The tyrants shall have the blood of both upon their heads."

" This is madness, Salathiel—impiety; oh

that you were this moment even as I am—in all but death.—It is your duty to live; you have many ties to the world. What have I? or what service can I do to the world, equal to that of showing in what peace a follower of my Lord and Master can die? Again, I say, oh that you were at this moment awake to the truths, the holy and imperishable consolations, that make the cross to me more triumphant than a throne!"

The theme was a painful one. He instantly saw my perturbation, and forbore to urge me. But fixing his humid eyes on heaven, and with uplifted hands, he gave me his parting benediction. "May the time come," said he, "when the veil shall be taken away from the face of my unhappy kindred, and of my undone country! When the days of the desolation of Israel come to be accomplished, let her kneel before the altar—let her weep in sackcloth, and repent of her iniquities; so shall the sun of glory arise upon her once more." Then, as if a flash of knowledge had darted into his soul, he fixed his solemn gaze on me. "Salathiel, you are not

fit to die; pray that you may not now sink into the grave: you have fierce impulses, untamed passions, of whose power you have yet no conception. Supplicate for length of years; rather endure all the miseries of exile; be alone upon the earth—weary, wild, and desolate: but pray that you may not die, until you know the truths that Israel yet shall know. Let it be for me to die, and seal my faith by my blood. Let it be for you to live, and seal it by your penitence. But live in hope. Even on earth, a day bright beyond earthly splendour; lovely beyond all the visions of beauty; magnificent and powerful beyond the loftiest thought of human nature, shall come; and we, even we, my brother, shall on earth meet again."

CHAPTER XVII.

THERE was a thrilling influence in the words of Eleazar, that left me without reply; and for a while I stood absorbed. When I raised my eyes again, I saw him following the melancholy train down the valley of slaughter. I rushed after him. He would not listen to my entreaties; he would suffer no ransom to be offered for his life. I supplicated the tribune of the escort for a moment's delay, until I could solicit mercy from Titus. The officer, himself deeply pained by the service on which he was ordered, had no authority; but sent a centurion with me to the general commanding.

I hurried my guide through the immense

force, drawn out to witness the offering to the shades of the Roman senators and soldiers. The morning was stormy; and driving clouds covering the ridges of the hills, darkened the feeble dawn so much, that torches were necessary to direct the movement of the troops. The wind came howling through the spears and standards; but with it came the fiercer sounds of human agony. As we reached the entrance of the valley, the centurion pointed to the height where the general stood, in the midst of a group of mounted officers wrapped in their cloaks, against the sleet that came furiously whirling from the hills.

I darted up the steep with a rapidity that left my companion far below; and implored the Roman humanity for my countrymen, and for my noble and innocent brother. On my knee, on the knee that I had never before bowed to man, I besought the illustrious son of Vespasian to spare men, "whose only crime was that of having defended their country." I adjured the heir of the empire "to rescue from an ignominious fate, subjects driven into revolt only by

violences, which he would be the first to disown. If," said I, "you demand money for the lives of my countrymen, it shall be given even to our last ounce of silver: if you would have territory, we will give up our lands, and go forth exiles. If you must have life for life, take mine, and let my brother go free!"

The general slowly removed the cloak which covered him to the eyes; and Cestius was before me. "So," said he, with a malignant smile, "you can kneel, Jew, and play the rhetorician: however, as you are here, your having escaped me once, is no reason why you should laugh at justice a second time. Here, Torquatus," he beckoned to an officer, "take this rebel to the crosses; and bring me an account of the way in which he behaves. You see, Jew, that I have some care of your reputation. A fellow, careless as you are, would probably have died in some paltry skirmish; but you shall now figure before your countrymen, as a patriot should, and die with the honours of a native hero."

I disdained to answer. The officer came up, attended by some spearmen; and I was led to

the valley. A snow-storm of extraordinary violence, long gathering on the sky, broke forth as I descended, and it was only by grasping the rocks and shrubs on the side of the declivity that we could avoid being blown away. We staggered along blinded and half-frozen. The storm fell heavily upon the legions, and the heights were quickly abandoned for the shelter of the valley. The valley itself was a sheet of snow, torn up by fierce blasts that drifted it hazardously upon the troops, and threw every thing into confusion.

But the sight that opened on me as I passed the first gorge, effaced storm, and soldiery, and might have effaced the world, from my mind. Through the whole extent of the huge, naked and rocky hollow, were planted crosses. The ravine, dark even in sun-shine, was now black as midnight; and its only light was from the scattered torches, and the fires into which the bodies of the victims were flung as they died, to make room for others. On those crosses hung hundreds, writhing in miseries, made only to show the hideous capability of suffering that

exists in our frame. I was instantly recognised, and many a hand was stretched out to me, imploring that I should mercifully hasten death. I heard my name called on, as their prince, their leader, their countryman, to remember and revenge. Incensed and horror-struck, I raved at the legionaries and their tyrant master; until I sank upon the ground in exhaustion, covering my head with my mantle, that I might exclude alike sight and sound.

A voice at my side aroused me; a cross had just been fixed on the spot, and at its foot stood, preparing for death, the man who had spoken. I looked upon his face, and gave an involuntary cry. For seven-and-thirty years I had not seen that face; but I had seen it on a night never to be erased from my remembrance, or my soul. I knew every feature of it through all the changes of years.

Manhood had passed into age; the bold and sanguine countenance was furrowed with cares and crimes. But I knew at once the man who had on that night been foremost at my call; the daring rabble leader, who had first shouted at

my fatal summons; and maddened the multitude, as I had maddened myself and him. He turned his glance upon me at the cry. His pale visage grew black as death. The past flashed upon his soul. He shook from head to foot with keen convulsion. He gasped, and tried to speak, but no words came. He beat his breast wildly, and pointed to the cross with dreadful meaning. The executioner, a brutal slave, scoffed at him as a dastard. He heard nothing; but with his pallid eyes staring on me, and his hand pointed upwards, stood stiffening. Life departed as he stood! The executioner, impatient, laid his grasp upon him; but he was beyond the power of man. He fell backward like a pillar of stone.

I started from the corpse, and, utterly unnerved, looked wildly round for some way of escape from this scene of despair. As I tried to penetrate the dusk towards the bottom of the valley, Eleazar was seen at the head of his little band, standing at the foot of a cross, surrounded by soldiers. I thought no more of safety; and plunging into the valley, forced my

way through the rocks and snow-drifts, till I reached the foot of the declivity on which this true hero was about to die. But there an impenetrable fence of spears stopped me. I implored, execrated, struggled; Eleazar's eye fell on me; and the smile on his uplifted countenance showed at once how much he thanked me, and how calmly he was prepared to bid the world farewell. My struggles were useless, and I had but one resource more.

I flew, with a swiftness that baffled pursuit, to the camp; passed the intrenchments by the breaches left since the battle; and, before I could be stopped or questioned, entered the tent of Titus.

The supper lamps were burning, and three stately-looking men still lingered over the table, one of the few unpopular luxuries of the general. A large packet of letters were being distributed by a page; and, while I stood in the shade of the tent-curtain a moment until I should ascertain whether Titus was among the three, I was made the unwilling sharer of the secrets of Rome.

"All is going on well," said one of the readers. "Here, that truest of courtiers, my showy friend Statilius, sends, compiled by his own hand, an endless list of the pomps and processions, games and congratulations, in the Emperor's progress through Italy. The intelligence is not the newest in the world. But it would break my courtly friend's heart to think that he had not the happiness of giving it first. So let him think, and so let him worship the rising sun, until another dynasty comes, and he discovers that if this sun have risen in the east, a much finer one may rise in the west. Thus runs the world."

"War with the Britons," read another. "They have marched a hundred of their naked clans from the hills. The remnant of the Druids are busy again with their incantations; and it is more than suspected that the whole is stirred up by our incomparable governor of western Gaul, who affects the diadem, like all the ridiculous governors of the age."

"Well, then, he shall have his wish," said a third. "The Emperor will give him, of course,

a court fit for a rebel: his council, lictors; and his palace, a dungeon in the Mamertine. But, as to the Britons, I doubt their caring one of their own leather pence whether he wears the diadem or the halter. The savages have probably been vexed by some new attempt to squeeze money from them—the quickest way to try the national sensibilities. They have the spirit of trade in them already, and are as keen in the barter of their wolf skins and bulls hides, as if they supplied the world with Tyrian canopies and Indian pearls."

"A letter from Sempronius!—By Venus, its exquisite intaglio and elaborate perfumes would betray it all the world over; full of scandals, as usual, and full of discontent. He seems quite dismantled; and complains that—the sex are growing ugly, the seasons comfortless, and mankind dull; a certain sign that my emptiest of friends, and the best dresser in Italy, is growing old."

"So much the better for his circle. As for himself, while he can flourish in curls and calumny, he will be happy, the true man of

high life, a prey to tailors, a figure for actors to burlesque, and an inveterate weariness to the world."

"But here is a despatch from the Emperor, and, unfortunately for human eyes, written in his own, most unreadable, hand." The speaker stood up to the lamp, and gave me an opportunity of observing him. His countenance and figure struck me, as what no other word could express than—princely. The features were handsome, and strongly marked Italian; and the form, though tending to breadth, and rather under the usual stature, was eminently dignified. His voice too was remarkable. I never heard one that more completely united softness and majesty.

Here I could have but the shadow of a doubt that I had found Titus; yet I had that shadow. Our meeting in the field, where we had fought hand to hand, gave me no recollection of the man before me. Titus might not even be among the three; and nothing but seizure and ruin could be the consequence of discovering myself to subordinates.

"Good news, it is to be hoped," said both the listeners together, as they deferentially watched his perusal.

"None whatever; a mere private chronicle, in the Emperor's usual style; all kinds of oddities together. He laughs at me for complaining of want of intelligence from Rome, and says that, unless we send him some, the politicians of the city will die of emptiness, or raise a rebellion; and that he is the most ill-used personage in the empire, in being obliged to supply brains for so many blockheads, and keep up the reputation of an honest man, in the midst of so many knaves. But he mentions, and for that I am deeply grateful, that he has just erected the golden statue, which I vowed so long ago to the memory of my unfortunate friend Britannicus; and is about to dedicate an ivory equestrian one to him, to be placed in the Circus. He concludes the epistle with saying that, unless the British insurrection speedily blows over, he shall be a beggar, and must turn tribune for a livelihood; defends his impracticable manuscript, which, he says, I am

imitating as fast as I can; and repeats his old jest, that—if I were not born to be a prince and an idler, I might have made my bread by my talents for forgery." His hearers repaid the imperial merriment by its full tribute of loyal laughter.

Doubt was now at an end, and I advanced. My step roused the party, and they started up, drawing their swords. But the quick eye of Titus recognised me; and satisfying his companions by a gesture, I heard him pronounce to them; "My antagonist, the prince of Naphtali." There was no time for ceremony; and I addressed him at once.

"Son of Vespasian, you are a soldier, and know what is due to the brave; I come to solicit your mercy; it is the first time that I ever stooped to solicit man. My brother, a chieftain of Israel, is in your hands, condemned to the horrid death of the cross; he is virtuous, brave, and noble; save him, and you will do an act of justice more honourable to your name than the bloodiest victory."

Titus looked at me in silence, and evidently

perplexed; then returned to his chair, and having consulted with his companions, hesitatingly pronounced: "Prince, you know not what you have asked. I am bound, like others, by the Emperor's commands; and they strictly are, that none of your countrymen, taken after the offer of peace, must live."

"Hear this, God of Israel," I cried, "King of vengeance, hear and remember."

"You are rash, prince," said Titus, gravely; "yet I can forgive your national temper. With others, even your venturing here, might bring you into hazard. But, the perfidy of your people makes truce and treaty impossible. They leave me no alternative. I lament the necessity. It is the desire of the illustrious Vespasian to reign in peace. But this is now at an end."

He paused, and advancing towards me offered his hand, with the words, "I know that there are brave and high-minded men among your nation. I have been astonished at the valour, nay, I will call it, the daring and heroic contempt of suffering and death, that this siege

has already shown. I have been witness too," and he smiled, "of the prince of Naphtali's prowess in the field, and I would most willingly have such among my friends."—I waited for the conclusion. "Why not come among us," said he; "give up a resistance that must end in ruin; abandon a cause that all the world sees to be desperate; save yourself from popular caprice, the violence of your rancorous factions, and the final fall of your city?—Be Cæsar's friend; and name what life, possession, or employ, you will."

The thought of deserting the cause of Jerusalem was profanation. I drew back, and looked at the majestic Roman, as if I saw the original tempter at my side.

"Son of Vespasian, I am at this hour a poor man; as I may in the next be an exile or a slave; I have ties to life as strong as ever were bound round the heart of man; I stand here a suppliant for the life of one whose loss would embitter mine! Yet, not for wealth unlimited, for the safety of my family, for the life of the noble victim that is now standing at the place

of torture, dare I abandon, dare I think the impious thought of abandoning, the cause of the City of Holiness."

The picture of her ruin rose before my eyes, and tears forced their way; my strength was dissolved; my voice was choked. The Romans fixed their looks on the ground, affected by the sincerity of a soldier's sorrow. I took the hand, that was again offered.

"Titus! in the name of that Being, to whom the wisdom of the earth is folly, I adjure you to beware. Jerusalem is sacred. Her crimes have often wrought her misery—often has she been trampled by the armies of the stranger. But she is still the City of the Omnipotent; and never was blow inflicted on her by man, that was not terribly repaid.

"The Assyrian came, the mightiest power of the world; he plundered her temple, and led her people into captivity. How long was it before his empire was a dream, his dynasty extinguished in blood, and an enemy on his throne!—The Persian came; from her protector, he turned into her oppressor; and his empire

was swept away like the dust of the desert!—The Syrian smote her: the smiter died in agonies of remorse; and where is his kingdom now?—The Egyptian smote her; and who now sits on the throne of the Ptolemies?—Pompey came; the invincible, the conqueror of a thousand cities; the light of Rome; the lord of Asia, riding on the very wings of victory. But he profaned her Temple: and from that hour he went down—down, like a mill-stone plunged into the ocean! Blind counsel, rash ambition, womanish fears, were upon the great statesman and warrior of Rome. Where does he sleep? What sands were coloured with his blood? The universal conqueror died a slave, by the hands of a slave!—Crassus came at the head of the legions; he plundered the sacred vessels of the sanctuary. Vengeance followed him, and he was cursed by the curse of God. Where are the bones of the robber and his host? Go, tear them from the jaws of the lion and the wolf of Parthia,—their fitting tomb!

"You, too, son of Vespasian, may be com-

missioned for the punishment of a stiff-necked and rebellious people. You may scourge our naked vice by the force of arms; and then you may return to your own land exulting in the conquest of the fiercest enemy of Rome. But shall you escape the common fate of the instrument of evil?—shall you see a peaceful old age?—shall a son of yours ever sit upon the throne?—shall not rather some monster of your blood efface the memory of your virtues, and make Rome, in bitterness of soul, curse the Flavian name?"

Titus grew pale; and shuddering, covered his eyes with his mantle, as he sat. His companions stood gazing on me with the awed aspect of men gazing on the messenger of fate. "Spare Eleazar," was all that I could utter. Titus made a sign to the page; who flew to bear, if not too late, the orders of mercy.

While we continued in a silence, that none of us felt inclined to break; a door opened behind me, and an officer entered. It was Septimius. I seized him by the throat: "Villain! give me back my child; base hypocrite!

give up my innocent daughter. Where have you taken her? lead me to her, or die."

Titus rose in evident surprise and indignation. "What do I hear, Septimius? have you been guilty of this offence? Prince, let him loose; until his General shall hear what he has to say for himself."

Septimius affected the most extreme and easy ignorance. "Most noble Titus, I have to thank you for having saved my neck from the grasp of this hasty personage; but, beyond that, I have nothing to say for myself, or any one else.—I never saw this man before.—I know no more of his daughter, than of the queen of Abyssinia, or the three-formed Diana; and, by the goddess I swear, that I believe him to be perfectly under her influence; and either a lunatic, or a most excellent actor. Be honest, Jew, if you can; and acknowledge that you never saw me before in your life."

I stood in astonishment; his effrontery struck me dumb. "You perceive, most noble Titus," he went on, "how a plain question puts an end to this public accuser's charges. But, in

his present state, whether affected or real, he should not be suffered to go at large: suffer me to send him to my quarters, where he shall be taken sufficient care of, until we at least find out what brought him here."

"Ingrate," I exclaimed, "you make me hate human nature; is this my return? better that I had left you to be trampled like the viper that you are."

The dark eye of the general fixed on Septimius, seemed to require a graver explanation.

"Ingrate," retorted he. "By Jupiter, the fellow's insolence is superb. For what should I be grateful? but for my escape from his detestable hands; or, perhaps, he means those of his countrymen. Very probably he figured among the rabble that would have murdered me, as they did the rest of us:—grateful, yes, I ought to be, for an exhibition of human villany, that I might search the world through without seeing again; or, for the lesson, never to venture within his walls on the faith of the traitors that hold them.—But, let me be allowed to say, most noble Titus, that you condescend too much in

listening to any of this rabble; nay, that you hazard the safety of the state in hazarding your person within the reach of one of a race of assassins."

Titus smiled; and waved back his companions, who, on the surmise, were approaching him.

"Let me be honoured with your commands," urged Septimius, "to take this person in charge: felon, or insane, I shall speedily put him in the way of cure."

A tribune, breathless with haste, came in at the moment with a letter, which he gave to Titus; and retired to a distant part of the tent to await the answer. The colour rose into the Roman's cheek, as he looked over the paper; he showed it to his companions, and then put it into my hand. I read the words—

"An assassin, hired by the chiefs of Jerusalem, yesterday passed the gates. His object is the life of the Roman general. He goes under pretence of recovering one of his family supposed to be carried off from the city, but who has never left his house. He has communi-

cations with the camp, by which he can enter at pleasure; and the noble Titus cannot be too much on his guard."

The note was in an enclosure from Cestius, stating that it had been just transmitted to him from a high authority in Jerusalem.

I flung it on the ground, with the scorn due to such an accusation, declaring, that it was unnecessary for "my enemy Cestius to have put his name to a document which so easily revealed its writer."

"You, of course, Septimius," said the general, settling his penetrating gaze on him, "could know nothing of this letter?"

Septimius entered on his defence with seriousness; and showed that, from the time and circumstances, no share in it could be attached to him. Titus retired a few steps, and having consulted with the officers, who I perceived were unanimous for my being instantly put to death, addressed me in that grave and silver-toned voice, which characterized the singular composure of his nature.

"We have exchanged blows, and pledges of

honour, prince; and I will not suffer myself to believe that a man of your rank and soldiership could stoop to the crime charged here. In truth, were none but personal considerations to be in question, I should instantly set you free. But there are weighty interests connected with my life, which make it seem fitting to my friends and advisers, that, in all cáses, precautions should be taken, which otherwise I should disdain. To satisfy their minds, and the spirit of the Emperor's orders, I must detain you for a few days. Your treatment shall be honourable."

Septimius advanced to again demand my custody. But a look repelled the request, and I was directed to follow one of the secretaries of Titus.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TROOP of cavalry were at the tent door. We set off through the storm; and, a few miles from the camp, reached a large building, peopled with a host of high functionaries, attached to Titus, as governor of Judea.

"You are a prodigious favourite with the general," said my companion, as we passed through a range of magnificent rooms furnished with Italian luxury; "or he would never have sent you here. He had these chambers furnished for his own residence, but your countrymen have kept him too busy; and for the last month he is indebted to you for sleeping under canvas."

I observed, that "peace was the first wish of my heart. But that no people could be reproached with contending too boldly for freedom."

"The sentiment is Roman," was the reply. "But let us come to the fact. Titus, once fixed in the government, would be worth all the fantasies that ever fed the declaimers on independence. His character is peace; and if he ever comes to the empire, he will make the first of monarchs. You should try him, and reap the first fruits of his talent for making people happy. There; look round this room: you see every panel hung with a picture, a lyre, or a volume; what does that tell?"

"Certainly not the habits of a soldier; yet he is distinguished in the field."

"No man more. There is not a rider in the legions that can sit a horse, or manage a lance, better. He has the talents of a general besides; and more than all, he has the most iron perseverance that ever dwelt in the bosom of man. If the two armies were to slaughter each other until there was but half a dozen spearmen

left between them, Titus would head his remnant, and battle it out till he died. But whether it is nature, or the poison that he drank with Britannicus, he wants the eternal vividness of his father. Aye, there was the soldier for the legions. Look, prince, at this picture, and tell me what you think of the countenance."

He drew aside a curtain that covered a superb equestrian portrait of the Emperor.

I saw a countenance of incomparable shrewdness, eccentricity, and self-enjoyment. Every feature told the same tale; from the rounded and dimpled chin to the broad and deeply veined forehead, overhung with its rough mat of hair. The hooked nose, the deep wrinkles about the lips, the thick dark eyebrow, obliquely raised, as if some new jest was gathering, showed the perpetual humourist. But the eye beneath that brow,—an orb black as charcoal, with a spot of intense brightness in the centre, as if a breath could turn that coal into flame,—belonged to the supreme sagacity and determination that had raised Vespasian from a cottage to the throne.

The secretary, whose jovial character strongly resembled that of the object of his panegyric, could not restrain his admiration. "There," said he, "is the man who has fought more battles, said more good things, and taken less physic, than any emperor that ever wore the diadem. I served with him from decurion up to tribune; and he was always the same, active, brave, and laughing from morn till night. Old as he is, day-light never finds him in his bed. He rides, swims, runs, outjests every body; and frowns at nothing on earth, but an old woman and a physician. He loves money, 'tis true; but what he squeezes from the overgrown, he scatters like a prince. But his mirth is inexhaustible; a little rough, so much for his camp education; but the most curious mixture of justice, spleen, and pleasantry in the world." My companion's memory teemed with examples.

—"An Alexandrian governor was ordered to Rome to account for a long course of extortion: immediately on his arrival he pretended to be taken violently ill; which of course put off the inquiry. The Emperor heard of this; expressed

the greatest interest in so meritorious a public servant; paid him a visit the next day as a physician; ordered him a variety of medicines, which the unfortunate governor was compelled to take; renewed his visit regularly every day, and every day charged him an enormous fee. Beggary stared the governor in the face; and never was a complication of disorders so rapidly cured.

—"I was riding out with him one day, a few miles from Rome, when we saw a fellow beating his mule cruelly; and, on being called to, insisting on his right to 'do what he would with his own.' I was indignant, and would have fought the mule's quarrel. But the Emperor laughed at my zeal; and after some jesting with the brutal owner, bought the mule, only annexing the condition, that the fellow should lead it to the stable:—he actually sent him with the mule two hundred and fifty miles, on foot, to one of his palaces in Gaul, with a lictor after him, to see that the contract was fairly performed.

—"One of his chamberlains had been soliciting

a place about court for, as he said, his brother. The Emperor found out the fact, that it was for a stranger, who was to lay down a large sum. He sent for the stranger, ratified the bargain, gave the place, and put the money in his own pocket. The chamberlain was in great alarm on meeting the Emperor some days after. "Your dejection is natural enough," said Vespasian, "as you have so lately lost your brother; but then, you should wish me joy, for he has become mine.

"By the altar of Momus, and the brass beard of the god Ridiculus, I could tell you a hundred things of the same kind," said the jovial and inexhaustible secretary. "Take but one more."

—"One of our great patricians, an Æmilian, and as vain and insolent a beast as lives, had ordered a quantity of a particularly striped cloth, which it cost the merchant infinite pains to procure. But the great man's taste had altered in the mean time, and he returned the cloth without ceremony, threatening besides, that, if the merchant made any clamours on the subject, his

payment should be six months' work in the slave-mill.

"The man, on the verge of ruin, came, tearing his hair and bursting with rage, to lay his complaint before the Emperor; who, however, plainly told him that there was no remedy; but desired him to send a dress of the cloth to the palace. Within the week, the patrician was honoured with a message, that the Emperor would dine with him, and the message was accompanied with the dress, and an intimation that Vespasian wished to make it popular. Rome was instantly ransacked for the cloth; but not a yard of it was to be found but in the single merchant's hands. The patrician's household must be equipped in it, cost what it would. The dealer, in pleasant revenge, charged ten times the value, and his fortune was made in a day.

"Now Titus, with many a noble quality, is altogether another man. He abhors the Emperor's rough-hewn jocularity; he speaks Greek better than the Emperor does his own tongue, is a poet, and a clever one besides, in both lan-

guages; extemporises verse with elegance; is no mean performer on the lyre; sings; is a picture-lover, and so forth. I believe from my soul that, with all his talents for war and government, he would rather spend his day over books, and his evenings among poets and philosophers, or telling Italian tales to the ears of some of your brilliant orientals, than ride over the world at the head of the legions. And now," said my open-hearted guide, "having betrayed court secrets enough for one day, I must leave you, and return to the camp. Here you will spend your time as you please; until some decision is come to. The household is at your service, and the officer in command will attend your orders;—farewell!"

Captivity is wretchedness, even if the captive trod on cloth of gold. My treatment was imperial; a banquet, that might have feasted a Roman epicure, was laid before me; a crowd of attendants, sumptuously habited, waited round the table; music played, perfumes burned; the whole ceremonial of princely luxury was gone through, as if Titus were present, instead

of his heart-broken prisoner. But to that prisoner, bread and water with freedom would have been the truer luxury.

I wandered through the spacious apartments, dazzled by their splendour, and often ready to ask, "Can man be unhappy in the midst of these things?" yet, answering the question in the pang of heart which they were so powerless to soothe.

I took down the richly-blazoned volumes of the Western poets, and while, at every line that I unrolled, I felt how much richer were their contents than the gold and gems that incased them, I yet felt the inadequacy of even their beauty and vigour to console the spirit stricken by real calamity.

I threw aside the volumes, and strayed to the casements, through which the sun-set began to pour in a tide of glory. The landscape beneath was beautiful;—a peaceful valley shut in with lofty eminences, on whose marble foreheads the sun-beams wrought coronets, as coloured and glittering as ever were set with chrysolite and ruby. The snow was gone as

rapidly as it had come; and the green earth in the freshness of the bright hour might almost be said "to laugh and sing." The air came fanning and warm from the reviving flowers. There was a light and joyous beauty in even the waving of the shrubs, as they shook off the moisture in sparkles at every wave; birds innumerable broke out into song, and fluttered their little wet wings with delight in the sun-shine; and the rivulet, still swelled with the shower, ran dimpling and gurgling along, with a music of its own.

But the true sadness of the soul is not to be scattered by the life and loveliness of external things. I turned from the sun and nature to fling myself on my couch, and feel that, where a man's treasure is, there his heart is also.

"What might not be doing in Jerusalem? what fanatic violence, personal revenge, or public license might not be let loose, while I was lingering among the costly vanities of the Pagan? My enemy, at least, was there, in the possession of unbridled authority;" and the thought was in itself a history of evil.

"And where was Esther, my beloved, the child of my soul, the glowing and magnificent-minded being, whose beauty and whose thoughts were scarcely mortal? Might she not be in the last extremity of suffering, helplessly calling on her wretched father to save her; in the dungeon, withering with cold and famine, and upbraiding me for having forgotten my child; or in the hands of the robbers of the desert, and dragging her delicate and sinking form through rocks and sands at the mercy of savages; or dead, and have died without a hand to succour, or a voice to cheer her in her hour of agony?

Thought annihilates time, and I lay thus sinking from depth to depth, I know not how long; till I was roused by the entrance of the usual endless train of attendants with lights; and the chief steward, a venerable man of my country, whom Titus had generously continued in the office where he found him, came to acquaint me that a new banquet awaited my pleasure. The old man wept at the sight of a chieftain of Israel in captivity; his heart was full, and when I had dismissed the attendants

with their untasted banquet, he gave way to his recollections.

The palace was once the dwelling of Ananus, the high-priest, whose death under the cruelest circumstances was the leading cause of the triumph of the factions, and the ruin of Jerusalem. In the very chamber where I sat he had spent the last day of his life; and left it only to take charge of the Temple on the fatal night of the assault by the Idumæans. He was wise and vigorous; but, what is the wisdom of man?

A storm, memorable in the annals of devastation, raged during the night; Ananus, convinced that all was safe from human hostility in this ravage of the elements, suffered the wearied citizens to retire from their posts. The gates were opened by traitors; the Idumæans, furious for blood and spoil, rushed in; the guard, surprised in their sleep or dispersed, were massacred; and by day-light eight thousand corpses lay on the sacred pavements of the Temple; and among them the noblest and wisest man of Judea, Ananus.

"I found," said the old man, "the body of my great and good lord under a heap of dead, but was not suffered to convey it to the tomb of his fathers in the valley of Jehoshaphat. I brought his sword and his phylactery here, and they are now the only memorials of the noblest line that perished since the Maccabees. In these chambers I have remained since, and in them it is my hope to die. The palace is large; the Roman senators and officers reside in another wing, which I have not entered for years, and shall never enter; mild masters as the Romans have been to me, I cannot bear to see them masters within the walls of a chief of my country."

The story of Naomi occurred to me; but she was so much beyond my hope of discovery, that I forbore to renew the old man's griefs by her name. A sound of trumpets and the trampling of cavalry was heard from the portal.

"It is but the nightly changing of the troops," said the steward, "or perhaps the arrival of some officers from the camp: they often ride here after night-fall to supper, spend a few hours, and by day-break are gone. But of

them and their proceedings I know nothing. No Jew enters, nor desires to enter, the banquet-hall of the enemies of his country.

A knocking at the door interrupted him, and an officer appeared, with an order for the prisoners in the palace to be removed into strict confinement. The venerable steward gave way to tears at the new offence to a leader of his people. I felt some surprise; but merely asked what new alarm had demanded this harsh measure.

"I know no more," replied the officer, "than that the general has arrived here a few minutes since; and that, as some attempts have been lately made on his life, the council have thought proper to put the Jewish poniards as much out of his way as they can. The order is universal; and I am directed to lead you to your apartment."

"Then, let them look to my escape," said I. "I thank the council for this service. While I continued above suspicion, they might have thrown open every door in their dungeons. But, since they thus degrade me, you may tell

them that their walls should be high, and their bolts strong, to keep me their prisoner. Lead on, sir."

The council seemed to have been aware of my opinions; for my new chamber was in one of the turrets; the customary place of detention for prisoners supposed to be peculiarly difficult to keep within bounds. The lower floor being generally occupied by the guard, there could be no undermining: the smallness of the building laid all the operations of the fugitive open to the centinel's eye; and the height was of itself an obstacle that, even if the bars were forced, might daunt the adventurer.

The steward followed me to my den, wringing his hands. Yet the little apartment was not incommodious; there were some obvious attempts at rendering it a fitter place of habitation than usual; and a more delicate frame than mine might have found indulgence in its carpets and cushions. Even my solitary hours were not forgotten, and some handsome volumes from the governor's library occupied a corner.

There was a lyre too, if I chose to sing my sorrows; and a gilded chest of wine, if I chose to drink them away. The height was an inconvenience only to my escape: but a lover of landscape and fresh air would have envied me; for I had the range of the horizon, and the benefit of every breeze from its four quarters. A Chaldee would have chosen it for his commerce with the lights of heaven; for every star, from the gorgeous front of Aldebaran to the minutest diamond spark of the sky, shone there in its brightness. And a philosopher would have rejoiced in the secluded comfort of a spot, which, in the officer's parting pleasantry, was in every sense "so much above the world."

CHAPTER XIX.

To me the prison and the palace were the same. No believer in fate, and a strong believer in the doctrine that, in the infinite majority of cases, the unlucky have to thank only themselves; feeling, too, that the manly and the wise disdain to act by borrowed will or wisdom; I was yet irresistibly conscious of my own stern exception. That there was an influence hanging over me, I deeply knew; that I might as well strive with the winds, was the fruit of my whole experience; and, with as much self-resolve in me as I ever knew in man, and as lofty a calculation of the wonders that human energy may work, I abandoned myself on principle to

the chances of the hour.—I was the weed upon the wave; and, whether above or below the surface, I knew that the wave would roll on, and that I must roll on along with it.—I was the atom in the air; and, whether I should float unseen for ever, or be brought into sight by the gilding of some chance sun-beam across me, my destiny was to float and quiver up and down.—I was the vapour; and whether, like the evening cloud, my after years were to evolve into glorious shapes and colours, or I should creep along the pools and valleys of fortune till the end of time,—yet, there I was, still in existence, and that existence bound by laws incapable of the choices or caprices of man.

I had yet to learn the true burden of my great malediction: for the circumstances of my life were yet adverse to its fated solitude of soul; its bitter conviction that there was not a being under the canopy of heaven whose heart was towards me; its dull and melancholy exile, in the midst of a world full of activity, hope, and passion. I was still in the very eddy of

life, and battling it with the boldest. My family survived: public cares, personal interests, glowing attachments, the whole vigorous activity of the citizen and the soldier, were mine. I was still husband, father, friend, champion of a great people; my task was difficult and grave, but it was ardent, proud, and animating. I was made for this activity of the whole man; master of a powerful frame that defied fatigue, and was proof against the sharpest visitations of nature; and of an intellect, which, whatever might be its rank, rejoiced in tasking itself with labours that appalled and perplexed the multitude—in feeding and stimulating a perpetual passion for the grand and the imaginative—in giving itself up to an ambition, a devouring and inappeaseable desire of doing something, by which I should be rescued from the common obscurity; of planting in the waste the seed of a name which should spring up and flourish, and go on distending in vigour and majesty, when the more precocious fosterlings of the day were withered and dust.

Idle as I knew the praise of man, and sove-

reign as was my scorn for the meanness which stoops to the vulgar purchase of popularity, I felt and honoured the true fame—that renown, whose statue is devoted, not by the suspicious and clamorous flattery of the time, but by the solemn and voluntary homage of the future: whose splendour, like that of a new-born star, if it take ages to reach mankind, is sure to reach them at last, and shines for ages after its fount is extinguished: whose essential power, if it be coerced and obscured, like that of man while his earthly tenement still shuts him in, is thenceforth to develop itself from strength to strength—the mortal putting on immortality.

In the whirl of such thoughts I was often carried away, to the utter oblivion of my peculiar fate: for man and his associations were strong within me, in defiance of the command. The gloom often passed away from my soul, as the darkness does from the midnight ocean in the dash and foam of its own waters. Nature is perpetual; and drives the affections, sleeping or waking, as it drives the blood through the

old channels. It was only at periods, produced by strong circumstance, that I felt the fetter; but then, the iron entered into my soul!

To this partial pressure belongs the singular combination of such a fate as mine with an interest in the world, with my loves and hates, my thirst of human fame, my reluctance at the prospect of the common ills and injuries of life. I was a man; and this is the whole solution of the problem. For one remote evidence that I was distinct from mankind, I had ten thousand direct and constant, that I was the same. But, for the partiality of the pressure, there was a lofty reason.

The man who feels himself above the common fate, is instantly placed above the common defences of mankind. He may calumniate and ruin; he may burn and plunder; he may be the rebel and the murderer. Fear is, after all, the great security. But what earthly power could intimidate him! What were chains, or the scaffold, to him, who felt instinctively that time was not made for his being; that the scaffold was impotent; that he should yet

trample on the grave of his judge; on the mouldered throne of his king; on the dead sovereignty of his nation? With his impassiveness, his experience, his knowledge, and his passions, concocted and blackened by ages, what breast could be safe against the dagger of this tremendous exile; what power be secure against the rebel machination, or the open hostility of a being invested with the strength of immortal evil? What was to hinder a man made familiar with every mode of influencing human passions—the sage, the sorcerer, the fount of tradition, the friend of their worshipped ancestors—from maddening the multitude at whose head he willed to march, clothed in the attributes of almost a divinity?

But I was precluded, or saved, from this fearful career, by the providential feeling of the common repugnances, hopes, and fears of human nature. Pain and disease were instinctively as much shunned by me, as if I held my life on the frailest tenure; death was as formidable, as my natural soldiership would suffer it to be; and, even when the thought

occurred that I might defy extinction, it threw but a darker shade over the common terrors, to conceive that I must undergo the suffering of death, without the peace of the grave. Man bears his agony for once, and is done. Mine might be borne to the bitterest extremity, but must be borne with the keener bitterness of the knowledge that it was in vain.

I was recalled from those reveries to the world, by a paper dropped through a crevice in the rafters above my head. On seeing its signature, "Septimius," my first impulse was to tear it in pieces. But Esther's name struck me, and I read through the letter.

"You must not think me a villain, though, I confess, appearances are much in favour of the supposition. But, this morning, I had no choice between denying that I knew you, and being utterly ruined. This comes of discipline. Titus is a disciplinarian of the first order; and the consequence is, that no man dares acknowledge any little irregularity before him: so far, his morality propagates knaves. But I must clear myself of the charge of having acted disinge-

nuously by your admirable daughter. I take every power that binds the soul to witness, that I know not what is become of her; nay, I am in the deepest anxiety to know the fate of one so lovely, so innocent, and so high-minded.

"And now, prince, that I am out of the reach of your frown, let me have courage to disburden my heart. I have long known Esther, and as long loved her. From the time, when I was first received within your palace in Naphtali; and I have not forgotten, that to your hospitality I then owed my life; I was struck with her talents and her beauty. When the war separated us and I returned to Rome, neither in Rome, nor in the empire, could I see her equal. To solicit our union, I gave up the honours and pleasures of the court, for the campaign in your hazardous country. I searched Judea in vain; and it was chiefly in the vague hope of obtaining some intelligence of Esther, that I solicited the command of our unfortunate mission. There I felt all hazard more than repaid by her sight, to me lovelier than ever.

"I will acknowledge that I prolonged my

confinement, to have the opportunity of obtaining her hand. But her religious scruples were unconquerable. I implored her leave to explain myself to you. Even this, too, she refused, 'from her knowledge of your decision.' What then was I to do? Loving to excess, bewildered by passion, oppressed with disappointment, and seeing but one object on earth, my evil genius prompted me to act the dissembler.

"Under pretext of disclosing some secrets connected with your safety, I induced her to meet me, for the first and last time, on the battlements. There, I besought her to fly with me—to be my bride—to enjoy the illustrious rank and life that belonged to the Imperial blood; and when we were once wedded, to solicit the approval of her family. I was sincere; I take the gods to witness, I was sincere. But my entreaty was in vain: she repelled me with resolute scorn; she charged me with treachery to you, to her, to faith, and sacred hospitality. I knelt to her. She spurned me. In distraction, and knowing only that to live without her was wretchedness; I was bearing her away to

the gate, when we were surrounded by armed men. My single attendant fled: I was overpowered, and forced to the gate; and I saw Esther, my lovely and beloved Esther, no more."

There was an honesty in this full confession, that did more for the writer's cause than subtler language. The young Roman had been severely tried; and who could expect from a soldier the self-denial, that it might have been hard to find under the grave brow of philosophy? Stern as time and trial had made me, I was not petrified into a contempt of the generous weaknesses of earlier years: yet, to love a being like Esther—what was it, but to be just? and, while I honoured the high sense of duty which repelled a lover so dangerous to a woman's heart, I pitied and forgave the violence of a passion, lighted by unrivalled loveliness of form and mind.

It was growing late; and the steward, who made a virtue of showing me the more respect the more I was treated with severity, came in to arrange my couch for the night; "he would

suffer no inferior hands to approach the person of one of the leaders of his fallen country. In truth," added he, "if I were not permitted to be your attendant to-night, my prince might have been forgotten: for every human being but myself is busy in the grand banquet-gallery."

Sounds of instruments and voices arose. "There, you may hear the music. Titus gives a supper, in honour of the Emperor's birth-day; and the palace will be kept awake until day-light: for the Romans, with all their philosophy, are great lovers of the table; and Titus is re-nowned for late sittings.—Or would you wish to see them at their banquet?" so saying, he unbarred the shutters of a casement, commanding a view along the gallery; of which every door and window was thrown open for the breeze.

If an ancient Roman could start from his slumber into the midst of European life, he must look with scorn on its absence of grace, elegance, and fancy. But it is in its festivities, and, most of all, in its banquets, that he would

feel the incurable barbarism of the Gothic blood. Contrasted with the fine displays that made the table of the Roman noble a picture, and threw over the indulgence of appetite the colours of the imagination; with what eyes must he contemplate the tasteless and common-place dress, the coarse attendants, the meagre ornament, the want of mirth, music, and intellectual interest—the whole heavy machinery that converts the feast into the mere drudgery of devouring!

The guests before me were fifty or sixty splendidly-dressed men, attended by a crowd of domestics attired with scarcely less splendour; for no man thought of coming to the banquet in the robes of ordinary life. The embroidered couch, itself a striking object, allowed the ease of position, at once delightful in the relaxing climates of the south, and capable of combining with every grace of the human figure. At a slight distance, the table, loaded with plate glittering under the blaze of a profusion of lamps, and surrounded by couches thus covered with rich draperies, was like a central source of light

radiating in broad shafts of every brilliant hue. All that belonged to the ornament of the board was superb. The wealth of the patricians, and their perpetual intercourse with Greece, made them masters of the finest performances of the arts. The sums expended on plate were enormous. But its taste and beauty were essential to the refined enjoyment of the banquet. Copies of the most famous statues and groups of sculpture in the precious metals; trophies of the victories of Greek and Roman; models of the celebrated temples; were mingled with the vases of flowers and lighted perfumes; and, covering and colouring all, was a vast scarlet canopy which combined the groups beneath the eye, and threw the whole into the form that a painter would love.

But the true skill was shown in the constant prevention of that want of topic, which turns conversation into weariness. There was a perpetual succession of new objects and excitements. Even the common changes of the table were made to assist this purpose. The coming in of each Course was announced by music, and

the attendants were preceded by a procession of minstrels dancing, chaplet-crowned, and playing popular melodies. Between the courses, a higher entertainment was offered in the Recitations, pleasantries read or acted by a class of professional satirists of the absurdities of the day.

It is easy to imagine how fertile a source of interest this must have been made by the subtle and splenetic Italian, moving through Roman life, the most various, animating, and fantastic scene, in which society ever shone. The recitations were always looked to as the charm of the feast. They were often severe; but their severity was reserved for public men and matters. The court supplied the most tempting and popular ridicule; but the reciter was a privileged person, and all the better humoured Cæsars bore the castigation without a murmur. No man in the empire was more laughed at than Vespasian, and no man oftener joined in the laugh. One of his morning's sports was to collect the burlesques of the night before, give them new pungency by a touch of the imperial pen, and then despatch them to

make their way through the world. The strong-headed sovereign knew the value of an organ of public opinion, and used to call their perusal, "sitting for his picture." The picture was sometimes so strong, that the courtiers trembled. But the veteran who had borne thirty years of battle, laid it up among "his portraits," laughed the insult away; and repeated his popular saying, "that when he was old enough to come to years of discretion, and give up the emperor, he should become reciter himself, and have his turn with the world."

The recitations again were varied, by a sportive lottery, in which the guests drew prizes; sometimes of value, gems and plate; sometimes merely an epigram, or a caricature. The banquet generally closed with a theatric dance by the chief public performers of the day; and the finest forms and most delicate art of Greece and Iberia displayed—the story of Theseus and Ariadne; the flight of Jason; the fate of Semele, or some other of the brilliant fictions of their poetry. In the presence of this vivid scene, sat, tempering its wildness by the majesty of

religion, the three great tutelar idols of Rome, Jove, Juno, and Minerva, of colossal height, throned at the head of the hall; completing, false as they were, the most singular and dazzling combination that man ever saw, of the delight of the senses with the delight of the mind.

To me human joy was always a source of enjoyment; and in the sweet sounds of the harps and flutes, and the pleasant murmur of cheerful voices, I was not unwilling to forget the spot from which I listened. But the prisoner cannot long forget his cell; and closing the casement I walked away.

"Little I ever thought," sighed the old steward, "of seeing that sight. But all nations have fallen in their time, and perhaps the only wonder is, that Israel should have stood so long. But it is still stranger to my eyes to see that gallery as it is to-night: many a long year it has been shunned by Jew and Roman alike; for the enemy give way to dreams and the fear of apparitions beyond any other people; and the mighty things done in the times of our

fathers, and which, though dishonoured in the mouths of the heathen, made their report known through the earth, have made Judea a land of awe to its evil conquerors. It is fifteen years this very day, since I saw the light of lamp, or the foot of man, within those casements."

"Yet," said I, "the great Ananus lived as became his rank; and there were then no dangers to disturb him in the midst of his people."

"But there was one terrible event, which made those walls unhallowed; nay, even in this spot where we stand, I would not remain alone through the night, to have the palace for my own."

A rich and solemn strain of music that ushered in some change in the displays of the banquet, interrupted my question; while the old man's countenance assumed something of the alarm which he described.

"That sound," said he, shuddering, "goes to my heart. It is the same that I heard on the night of death. On that night Matthan, the only son of my great master, was to be wedded to the daughter of the prince of Hebron;

and that gallery was laid out for the wedding feast; all the leaders of Jerusalem were there, all the noble women, all the chief priesthood; all the grandeur, wealth, and beauty of our tribe. But Matthan was not the son of his father's mind. He was haughty, and the slave of passion; he had fled from his father's roof years before, and taken refuge among the mountains. The caravan passing through Galilee dreaded the name of Matthan, for he was bold; the chief of the hills saw his followers flying from his side, for deadly was the spear of Matthan; but he was generous, and often the slave rejoiced in the breaking of his chains, and the peasant saw his flocks cover the valley again, by the arm and the bounty of Matthan.

"When he returned, danger or sorrow had wrought a change in him like the passing from youth to age. His strength was withered, and his voice was broken down, like the voice of him that treads on the brink of the timely grave.

"His noble father wept over him, and gave him welcome, and the palace was filled with

rejoicing for the coming back of the first-born. But he took no delight in the feast, neither in the praises of men, nor in the voice of the singer. He wandered through his father's halls, even as the leopard, chained, and longing to escape to the desert and the prey again.

"Disturbances were beginning to be heard of in Jerusalem; and he fell into the hands of the evil: Onias, the man of blood, betrayed him into the secret ways of conspiracy against our conquerors. His heart was bold, and his temper high; and he was easily drawn into the desperate game, by a villain, who stirred up the generous spirit of our nobles, only to sell their blood to Rome.

"He grew more lonely and violent day by day; he withdrew from the amusements of his rank, and shut himself up in the wing of the palace ending in this tower. In this room, where we are sitting, I have seen his lamp burning through the livelong winter nights; and grieved over the sleeplessness that showed he was among the unhappy. Into his chamber none were suffered to enter, but the moun-

taineers alone, who had followed him in his wandering life, and whose speech none else could understand.

"I little dreamed what inhabitant was then in this cell. At last, a change was wrought upon him; he went forth; he took delight in the horse and the chariot, in the chase, and the feast, and the die. He plunged into public life with the eagerness of one thirsting and hungering for the applause of men. He harangued, he gave magnificent gifts, he filled up every hour with the labour of mind or body, like one to whom an hour of rest would be a blot in his existence. His illustrious father, that he might bless his posterity before he died, counselled him to take to wife Thamar, the fairest and noblest of the daughters of Hebron. The offer of the alliance of Matthan was heard with joy; and the day of the marriage was appointed.

"On that day I saw him come from the council-hall, after receiving the congratulations of his friends. I saw him passing along to his chamber; but I dared not cross him on his

way; I fled and hid myself behind the portal, even from the wrath of his countenance. He thought that he was alone; and then he gave way to his agony. Never did I behold such a countenance of wrath and woe. It was bloated with prodigal living, and it was now flushed with wine, swallowed to drown thought; but misery was branded there.

"He raved, he rent his bridal raiment, and cast it from him; he wept; he knelt and cursed the hour that he was born; he flung himself upon the ground, and rolled in a convulsion of rage and woe. At the least sound he would spring up, and, drawing his scimitar, swear to put the intruder to death. I remained in my refuge; yet more in fear of his countenance than of his sword. He took letters from his bosom, read them, and then scattering their fragments in the air, devoted himself to ruin, devoted his line, Judea, the world.

"He tottered towards me; and I dreaded his rage at the discovery; but I saw, at a glance, that his mind was gone. He was talking to the air; he clasped his hands wildly, his face

was covered with tears; he implored for mercy, and fell. I hastened to bear him to a couch; he saw me not; but cried out against himself, as a betrayer and a murderer, the feeble slave of others' will, the guilty fugitive from honour, the criminal marked by the hand of Heaven.

"I called for help. His mountaineers rushed in; they repulsed me; and, chiding him in their barbarian tongue, and seeming accustomed to those fits of sorrow, carried away in their arms the noble Matthan, complaining and crying like a child.

"The evening fell, and I saw him ride forth at the head of his kindred to bring home the bride. The wretchedness of the day was past; and those who looked only on the lofty bearing, and heard the joyous language of the leader of that train, would have thought that sorrow had never touched his heart. I watched for his return with fear and anxiety; for I deemed his joy unhallowed and fearful.

"But, all was well; the bridal procession returned. Matthan, glittering in jewels, came proudly reining his steed white as the snow;

the sounds of harp and trumpet—the chorus of the singers—the gay light of the torches—and the beauty of the youths and maidens who danced, and threw their crowns of flowers before the bride, made me forget every thing but the delight of seeing peace and prosperity come among us once more.

"When the bride and her female companions entered the hall reserved for them to prepare for the nuptial banquet, I followed my great master into the gallery. The bridegroom and a multitude of his friends were there already; and never was crowd more joyous. But the wonder and the life of all was the bridegroom himself. Loud as they were, his voice was the loudest; he laughed at every thing, as if he had never known a care in the world, or was never to know one again. The jest was never out of his lips; and when he pledged the cup to the health of the company or the fair bride, and often he pledged it that evening, he always said something that raised shouts of applause. I once or twice passed near him, but he had wiped every sign of grief from his features;

and if he seemed to be mad with any thing, it was with joy. The gallery rang with admiration, and not less with surprise; for he had shut himself up so long from the people, that he was almost unknown; and the world is generally good-natured enough to invent a character for those who will take no trouble to make one for themselves. Some had set him down for intolerable haughtiness; others for fear of mixing in the growing tumults; others for a dealer in the black art; and others, for a mere fool. But now opinions were altered at once, and every voice of his tribe was loud in wonder at the talents that he had so long hid in retirement. The old rejoiced to see the vigour and ability of Ananus renewed; the warriors and nobles still active in the public affairs, foreseeing the struggles that were to come, looked proudly to this newly discovered champion of their country; and the young, struck by his bold sentiments, were ready to fall down in homage to their future prince and leader.

"I was standing in the train of the high-priest, near the central casement, through which you

may now see the throne of Titus. My eyes, I know not why, strayed to this tower; I marked a lamp quivering, and a form rushing backwards and forwards in gestures of violent sorrow. A foot beside me made me turn. There stood Matthan with his eyes fixed upon the tower. But his gaiety was gone. His countenance was wild and yet cold. He looked like a man stricken to stone in the midst of some fierce burst of passion. He saw me not; he saw not the guests; he saw nothing but the dying lamp, and the hurrying form.

"The chorus of the singing women announced that the bride was about to enter.

"I looked up at the tower; the lamp was twinkling its last; and the form was still seen wringing its hands. The bridal preparations went on, and the hymn was heard that denotes the veiling of the bride. But my eyes were fixed on the dying light, and the form, that now held a cup in its hand. A shriek was heard, so wild, that the guests sprang from their seats in alarm and astonishment. My eye turned upon Matthan, but he had summoned up his strength, and,

though I saw him shake in every limb, his proud lip wore a smile.

"Yet even that was gone, as, with a start, and clasping his hand upon his brow, he abruptly turned from the window, and in a loud and angry tone demanded, why the bridal attendants delayed the coming of the princess of Hebron. The lamp had disappeared, and the tower was in darkness again. The attendants hastened—the portals were thrown open, and the bride, in grace and majesty that drew all eyes, was led up to the canopy beneath which the bridegroom stood. He raised the veil. His countenance was instantly transformed into blank horror. He uttered no voice; but stood gazing. The bride let fall the veil again, and taking his hand, led him slowly, and without a word, down the hall.

"None checked this strange ceremony; none dared to check it. We were deprived of all power by astonishment. The high-priest himself stood with his venerable hands lifted up to Heaven, as if he felt that evil was come upon his house. The wedded pair walked in

silence through the long range of chambers to the tower; and as they passed, the numberless attendants felt themselves bound by the same mysterious awe. But our senses at length returned, and Ananus, in the full dread of his misfortune, yet bold to his dying hour, suffered none to go before him. We found the door of the tower barred, and long summoned Matthan to come forth, and relieve our fears lest some desperate invention of sorcery or conspiracy had been played upon him. No answer was returned, and we forced the door.

"What a sight was there! Two corpses lay, side by side. The blood still trickled from the bosom of the unfortunate Matthan. I raised the veil; the hue of poison was upon the lips; but they were not the lips of the princess of Hebron. The countenance was Arabian, and of exceeding beauty, but wan and wasted by sorrow.

"A new confusion arose. The mountaineers, on hearing of the death of their lord, and still more of that noble creature in whom they honoured the race of their chieftains, demanded

vengeance: they were too fierce to listen to reason, and our attempts to explain the unhappy truth only kindled their rage. Scimitars were drawn, blood was shed; and though the barbarians were repelled, yet they plundered the wing of the palace, and bore off the infant offspring of their dead mistress; the last scion of an illustrious tree, that was itself so soon to feel the axe.

"The princess of Hebron was found alone, swooning at the tumult of the palace. I saw the unfortunate and guilty Matthan laid in the sepulchre of his fathers—the last that ever slept there; for his great sire, worthy of being laid in the monument of kings, was denied the honours of the grave by his murderers. Yet he sleeps in the noblest of all graves; his memory is treasured in the love and sorrows of his country.

"It was discovered that Matthan, during his wanderings in the desert, had wedded the daughter of a sheik; a generous and high-minded creature, who more than once saved him from being undone by his own recklessness. He loved

her with the violence of his nature; but the prospects which his rank and talents opened to him on his return to his country, made him shrink from the acknowledgment of the alliance of his wilder days. Yet to live without her he found impossible; and he brought her to the tower. Surrounded by his mountaineers, this portion of the palace was inaccessible; and his solitude, and the lights seen through the casements, were often thought to imply studies of the strange philosophy, or evil superstitions, that had begun to infect the noble youth of Palestine.

"But the necessity of sustaining his ambition by an illustrious marriage drove his fickle heart at last to treachery. The Arabian knew it, and disdaining to reproach the traitor, pined away before his eyes. Remorse and ambition alternately distracted him; he loved, and yet was forced along by the necessity that vice makes for itself. The bridal procession was seen by the unhappy prisoner, and she swallowed poison. The rest is beyond my power to account for. But it is rumoured among the

attendants, that strange sights have been seen, and sounds of a bridal throng heard in the chambers through which their last melancholy march was made; though, whether it be truth, or the common fear of the vulgar, I know not, nor indeed wish too curiously to inquire."

CHAPTER XX.

As the old man spoke, sounds arose not unsuited to his tale. But my faith in the legend did not amount to so sudden a realisation, and I looked towards the gallery. There, from whatever motive, every thing was in disturbance. The guests were hurrying from the tables. Many had thrown the military cloak over their festal robes; some were in the adjoining apartments equipping themselves with arms and armour. A group were standing round Titus, evidently in anxious consultation. In the spacious grounds below, horsemen were mounting, and attendants hurrying in all directions. The calls of the clarion and trumpet echoed through

the courts: shortly after, a large body of cavalry came wheeling round to the portal of the gardens; and Titus went forth, conspicuous among the bustling crowd, for his manly composure. He gave some orders, which were despatched by tribunes galloping as for their lives; then, mounting his charger, rode slowly through the gates at the head of his stately company, himself the most stately of them all.

The woods surrounding the palace soon intercepted the view of the imperial troop; and after straining my eyes as long as I could see the glitter of a helmet by the feeble moon, and exhausting my old companion's understanding in conjectures of the cause of this rapid change, I turned to my casement, to make that prayer for the peace of Jerusalem, which had been nightly on my lips from the hour when they first could pray; and which no danger, nor sorrow, nor disgust at mankind, nor the bitterest despair, has ever silenced during ages. From the dungeon has that supplication risen; from the mine; from the arid sands of the wilderness; from the savage shores of the farthest

ocean; from the bosom of the rolling waters; from the fires of the persecutor; from the field before the battle; from the field covered with its dead; from the living grave of the monk; from the cavern of the robber; from the palace; from the scaffold!

While I continued in this outpouring of the soul, with my eyes fixed on the cloudy throne of Him, whom no man hath seen nor can see! the morn seemed to be advancing on the sky; a pale reflection spread over the masses of rolling vapour; it lingered, faded, grew richer, again sank, and night covered the earth; again swelled, and a fierce lustre turned the low and heavy clouds to the colour of conflagration.

"There is an attack on either the enemy's camp or the city," I exclaimed to my companion, who was already dropping into slumber on his cushion. "Day-break it cannot be, for the middle watch has not been half an hour sounded. Help me to escape; be but my guide through the chambers, and name your recompense."

The steward wrung his helpless hands, and

offered his life to my service; but described the precautions of my jailers so fully, that I gave up the idea of immediate escape; and, after gazing at the sky until it became a sheet of darkness once more, bade him good night, and flung myself down, to seek such rest as I could find upon my pillow.

But I was tossed by anxious thoughts, and sleep was a tardy visitant. I heard the treading of the guard, till its recurrence irritated me. The moanings of the wind through the trees told me that a storm was rising; and to get rid of the uneasy conflict between the desire of sleep and the difficulty of shutting out thought, I rose, and watched the progress of the tempest.

The lightnings flashed in broad beams through the clouds, and the rain fell with the violence of the southern storm. But, through the flash, powerful and deepening again shone the red illumination above the city; and neither the roar of the wind, nor the dash of the descending deluge, could extinguish the shouts that, remote as they were, I knew to be shouts of battle.

I measured the tower with my eye, I tried the strength of the bars; but the attempt only served to disturb my companion, who had survived his sorrows long enough to sleep as soundly as if there were not a woe on earth. When I used some of the common-places of regret for the disturbance, "I am glad," said he, "that you awoke me; for I was dreaming the story of my unfortunate lord and his son over again."

"The natural result of your having so lately renewed its recollection, and of this having been the time of the catastrophe."

"Aye, the time is much, for every soul in the palace has had the story told to him to-day: the old retainers, who remember and weep over the days of their great master, are full of it. There is perhaps scarcely a room under this roof where some heart is not trembling to-night with ghostly fear; nor a peasant's thatch, where the death of Matthan and the Arabian has not made pale faces; nor a sentinel for miles round, who does not shiver at every falling leaf, and think of the shriek, the

avenging spirit, and the bridegroom stricken in his hour of pride. But,—Powers of Heaven preserve us! look there!"

I looked; but it was to the old man, whose countenance alarmed me with the idea that he had wrought his imagination to a hazardous extreme. I took his cold hand; and telling him that I felt myself unable to sleep, and should have the less merit in watching till morn, gently laid his stiffened limbs on the couch, and bade him try to rest. He lay as unresisting, yet fixed, as if he had been turned to ice. But the eye stared through the casement, till I followed its direction, yet with only the added belief that he was overcome by the common terrors of the household; for to me tenfold darkness lay upon every object from the ground to the battlements.

The departing officers and attendants kept the palace in tumult; but more than common urgency quickened them; and the last group, and the last sound of voices soon passed away, leaving the silence, like the darkness, deeper than ever.

I accidentally turned to the casement, and there—I saw a figure slight and shadowy, passing backward and forward in front of a quivering lamp! My surprise was more startling than I would venture to communicate to my companion, already almost paralysed with fear. But if I had conjured up a phantom to give force to the tale, none could have been more closely similar.

The figure was enveloped in robes whose richness I could perceive even across the court; the gestures, the wild hurry of the pacings through the chamber, the general air of woe and distraction, were not to be mistaken. In the midst of the silence I heard the creaking of bolts, and the fall of chains, that seemed to be at my side. A single word followed; but that word terribly comprehensive:—"Death!" The sound was uttered in a hollow and sepulchral tone, that left the imagination free to shape the picture with what sullenness it willed. But the sound was scarcely uttered, when I heard a shriek, wild as ever told of woe; saw

the figure sink down, and the lamp quiver, and expire!

The old man had seen what I had seen; but the natural feebleness of age left him a more helpless prey to superstitious fear; and no attempt to explain these singular coincidences could calm him. He was convinced that the vengeance which had stricken his master's house was still abroad; and that he had beheld its minister. Remonstrance was in vain; and he sank alternately into the reveries and the stupefaction of spiritual terror.

I tended him with the more interest, from my being not altogether unimpressed with the possibility that his alarms were just. I was no believer in the vulgar narratives of superstition. But nature has its mysteries: truth or judgment might be commissioned from sources strange to human perceptions. To give way to the workings of a sickly imagination, may characterise the vulgar, the idle, and the weak; but to admit the power of Heaven to suspend its own laws for its own purposes, is among the soundest conclusions of the pious and the wise.

While I sat beside the couch, and watched the ebbs and flows of life, in a frame that I sometimes expected to see give way utterly, a jarring of bolts again struck my ear. I listened with a strange emotion. But the sound soon ceased, and I was firm again. The old man had heard it, and in a new convulsion, grasped both my hands, and held me close. The sound returned; it increased; I saw the wall of the tower open, and the figure stand before me. "It is she, it is she," shudderingly murmured my companion, fixing his eyes on it, and holding me with the clasp of agony. The heart beat thick within me. But I interposed myself between the corpse-like being whom I held in my arms, and the unearthly visitant; and demanded "for what purpose it had come." The figure started as I spoke; then, gazing intently on me as I turned to the light, threw up its veil, and fell at my feet. The lovely Naomi was the spectre! But perfectly guiltless was the gentle girl of the ghostly potency of her presence, and the unfilial alarm into which she had thrown her adopted father;

whom she was delighted to find, but whom she candidly acknowledged, "she never dreamed of finding there."

"The tower contains a prisoner," said she tremblingly, "who must be saved this night; for to-morrow at day-break is his dreadful hour. I knew that he would be condemned; and we agreed on a signal by which I was to learn when the time was fixed. I have watched all night for it, and almost betrayed myself by a cry of horror that I could not suppress at the sight of that signal just now. I had no resource but to bear my own message, and assist him myself in escaping from this place of tyranny and sorrow."

"But, my child, who is the prisoner, or where?"

She blushed, and said, "One who saved me when the world was against me. He rescued me from the hands of barbarians; and could I leave him to perish?"

"Lead on then, and without delay; for day-break is not far. But how shall we find our way to his dungeon?"

"I paid high," said she, "for my knowledge of this tower; and it has no concealments from me; remove this bar."

I drew out a slender iron rod; some of the large stones of the wall gave way; and disclosed a winding stair in the depth of the wall, by which we descended. We found the prisoner writing, and so much occupied, that our light footsteps did not interrupt him.

"There," soliloquized he, as he ran his eye down the epistle; "I think, my masters, if not the better, some of you will be the wiser for my labours. Home truths are the truths after all. Titus will learn what a set of incurable reprobates he has about him; and by this time to-morrow, when I shall care as little for mankind as mankind ever cared for me, I shall do the state service; from my gibbet turn reformer, and make the scaffold popular.—And now for the farewell to my lady and my love."

He sighed, and threw down the pen. "No, my sweet Naomi, I can say nothing half so fond, or half so bitter, as my feelings at this moment. Would that I had never seen you,

if we are to part so soon.—Yet, why should I regret to have known innocence, beauty, and truth, in their perfection? No, my love, rosy was the hour when I first saw you, and proud is even the parting hour that tells me, I could have loved so noble a being.—But all is better as it is. How could I have borne to see you following the fortunes of a wanderer, of a man without a country, or a name?—Then, farewell, my Naomi; dearest, farewell; you were the gleam of sun-shine in my cloudy day, the star in my dreary night: and while my heart beats, you shall be there. Your name shall be the last upon my lips; and if there be thought beyond the grave, you shall be remembered and—oh, how deeply—loved!"

I had been on the point of disturbing his meditation; but Naomi, with the fine avarice of passion, would not lose a syllable. She held me back, and implored me by her countenance to let her have the full confession of her lover's faith. That beautiful countenance ran through all the shades of feeling, and was covered with blushes and tears, while the unconscious wor-

shipper poured out his devotion. But the time was flying; I insisted on interrupting this epicurism of the soul; and when Naomi found that she must feast no more, she would allow none but herself the pleasure of the surprise.

A sigh which swelled from the prisoner's heart, was echoed. He turned suddenly, and pronounced her name with a loudness of delight, that nothing but the chance that protects the imprudent, could have prevented from bringing the guard upon us. His quick eye soon caught me, where I stood in shadow; and he sprang forward to extinguish the intruder. But the lamp saved us from the encounter; and lifting his hands and eyes in amazement, he laughed as loudly as he had spoken.

"In the name of all the wonders of the world," exclaimed he, "are you here too? Where are we to meet next? We have met already in water, fire, and earth; and nothing is left for us now but the clouds. Come, be honest, prince, and tell me whether it was not for the sake of some such experiment that you ventured here; for between ourselves, if an-

other hour finds us within these four walls, we shall know the grand secret, as assuredly as Titus wears a head, and has a scoundrel at his elbow."

I was rejoiced to find that in attempting to save the life of Naomi's lover, I was discharging a debt to the preserver of my own. To my mention of this service, he replied with soldier-like frankness, that, "I owed him no obligation whatever; he had long hated the intolerable insolence and cruelty of Cestius, and the debt was on his side, as I had favoured him with an opportunity that every officer in the service would have been happy to possess. His chastisement would do him good, as well as the rest of the world; and thus, in fact, I might look upon myself as a benefactor to the human race."

Naomi hung upon me, pale and anxiously listening to every sound abroad. "This little trembler," said he sportively, as he took her passive hand, "I am destined to meet always in alarm. I first found her flying from a troop of human brutes, who were robbing the baggage

of the Roman camp; I thought her worth something better than to keep goats on the Libanus, and weave turbans for some Syrian deserter; she was of the same opinion, and fell in love with me on the spot." Naomi exclaimed against this version of the story.

"No matter for the mode," said he, "I give the facts. I dazzled her ambition by the promise of a palace,—in the air; bribed her avarice by the display of a purse, unconscious of gold; and bewitched her senses by a speech, a smile, and a figure, that for the first time in my life I found to be irresistible."

Naomi again protested; and the dialogue might have consumed the night without their discovering the lapse of time; had I not interposed, and inquired, what further means of escape were in our power. The lovely girl started from her waking dream, and pointed to a ring in the wall, which was connected with a concealed door. I tried it, but it resisted my force. At length we all strove at it together. But no door opened.

Naomi wrung her hands. "The unfortu-

nate lord of this tower in former times," said she, and the tear stood in her eye, " always predicted that it would be fatal to his family. To escape his own fate, he pierced its walls with passages in every direction; but they did not save my noble, my unfortunate father." She sat down weeping; while I tore at the ring, which finally broke off in my hands. The lover stood with folded arms, gazing in sad delight on the beautiful being, from whom he was so soon to part for ever; and whose face and form wore almost the shadowy loveliness of a vision.

The chance of their escape devolved on me solely; for neither would have desired to disturb that strange and melancholy luxury of contemplation. But, as the concealed door must be given up, the only resource was to return to my cell, and thence make our way through the passage by which Naomi had arrived. A glance from the casement showed me the court filled with soldiery, and lights moving through her chamber. This hope was gone.

In the deepest doubt and fear, I ventured up through the tower to discover whether my cell was not already in possession of the guard. I pushed back the door noiselessly; the cell was empty, even the old steward was gone. Imagination is a dangerous auxiliary in such a crisis; and it created out of this trivial change a host of alarms.—He must have fled to give notice of my retreat; or to rouse the vigilance of the soldiery by the story of the wonders that he had seen. Escape was hopeless. I even heard a confused whispering, which "proved that we had fallen into the snare."

There was now no alternative but to be seized and die; or to make a bold rush for life, and take our chance. I returned, carried the fainting Naomi up the stairs; and suppressing the infinite risk of the attempt to penetrate through a building in which nearly the entire of its inmates were still awake and busy, and which was guarded by the vigilance of Roman patrols, I advised that we should do any thing rather than remain where we were. She was timid and submissive; but to my surprise, her lover, whom I

had known the very soul of daring, and who met danger with a jovial scorn—the bold seaman, the haughty leader of men harder to be ruled than the elements, the gallant despiser of death but a day past, in the cause of a mere stranger—was now totally unnerved. The novelty of passion absorbed the heroic spirit of the youth; he lingered near his mistress, and gazed on her, with an intenseness that told, his world was there. To my questions he gave no answer; but obeyed, without a word or a glance turned from the exquisite countenance that sank and blushed under his gaze. If the actual power of enchantment had been wrought upon him, he could not have been more fixed, helpless, and charmed.

I heard the noise of pain, and thought of the ancient follower of the house of Ananus. My cooler judgment had acquitted him of betraying me into the enemy's hands. A part of the cell was filled up with the remnants of a canopy removed from the statelier apartments. The groan came from behind them. I drew them away, and saw a door open by which he must have

left the tower. I went forward a few steps; hope throbbed in me. I returned, desired the captain and Naomi to follow, wrapped myself in a cloak, and sword in hand led the way through the darkness. I had not gone far, when I found myself treading on a human body. I sprang back; but the figure, more startled than I, rolled down a succession of steps before me, and falling against a door burst it open. A strong light from within flashed up the stairs; and taking Naomi's hand, I led her down this steep and narrow outlet of the grand gallery. As she came towards the light, a wild cry was given, the man, whom I now perceived to be the steward, rose on his feet, and exclaiming, "It is she, risen from the grave, the Arabian!" rushed through the vast hall, in which were still a number of domestics setting it in order after the banquet. Every eye was turned to the spot from which we emerged. Naomi's white-robed form, followed by her lover's and mine wrapped to the brow in our dark mantles, formidably verified the superstition. The crowd were already prepared to witness a wonder on

this night of woe, they fled, or fell on their faces; the steward still rushing on, propagated terror before us; and through the long vista of lighted chambers, where to be seen might have been ruin, we moved unquestioned, until we saw the portal. It, too, had been thrown open by some of the fugitives: the gardens were deserted; the troops had been drawn by the search in Naomi's chamber to another quarter of the palace. Before us was welcome solitude; and we were soon traversing the wood-paths by the light of the stars.

CHAPTER XXI.

While we traversed the grounds, the heaving of the branches under the wind, which rose in strong gusts from time to time, and the rush of the rivulets from the hill-sides, which retained the swell of the melting snows, prevented our hearing other sounds. But when we emerged from this little forest of every plant that yields fruit or fragrance, and began to climb the surrounding ridge, the sights and sounds to which I had been so long accustomed broke upon us. To the south a long line of light showed where Jerusalem was struggling against a midnight assault; and the uproar of battle came melancholy upon the wind. The

Roman camp-fires blazed round the promontory Scopas, like the innumerable crevices of some huge volcanic hill breathing flame from root to summit.

But a more immediate peril lay in the route behind us. The first height from which we could see the palace, showed us the well-known fire-signals of the enemy flaming on its battlements. Our escape had, of course, been discovered. The signals were answered from every point of the horizon. Where was a signal, there was an enemy's post: we could not advance a step without the most imminent chance of seizure; and, in those times, death by the shaft or the sword was the instant consequence.

The signals were followed by the trumpet; and every blast from the palace-roof was answered for miles round. The whole horizon was alive with enemies; and yet, if in every call, captivity and death had not been the language, this circling echo of the noblest of all instruments of sound, coming in a thousand various tones from the varied distances, soft-

ened by the dewy softness of the night, and breathing from sources invisible, as if they were inspired only by the winds, or poured from the clouds, might have seemed lovely and sublime.

But a new alarm rose in the direction of the forest, which now lay beneath us, like a sea slightly silvered on its thousand billows by the sinking moon. The trampling of cavalry was distinctly heard in pursuit, and torches were seen wandering through the trees. The pursuit had turned into the very path by which we came; and the baying of a bloodhound up the ridge was guiding the cavalry to our inevitable capture, if we remained. I was resolved not to be taken, while I could fight or fly; and pointing out to my fellow-fugitives the detachment of horse as they glittered from the grove, and scoured the foot of the hills; I plunged down into a ravine, where I could expect to find only some torrent too deep for us to pass, and which might be our grave. But it was at least protracted fate: we should not fall alive into the hands of men exasperated to the last degree of animosity, and sure to sacrifice

us after the mockery of a prejudiced trial, and the misery of a dungeon. If we died, we should not leave our bodies to be insulted by the caprice of the brutal soldier; and no stain of weakness or submission should degrade the last hour of the sons of Jerusalem.

I had given Naomi into the hands of her lover; and, while they slowly descended the precipice, returned to its edge to ascertain whether the enemy were still upon our steps. The rock, towards the summit, was splintered into a number of little pinnacles; grasping one of which I clung, listening and gazing with indescribable nervousness. The sounds of pursuit had perished, or were so mingled with the common sounds of nature as to be unheard; and I was congratulating myself upon our total safety, and about to return to the spot where I had left my companions, when the torch-light shot up from the dell immediately below me. It passed rapidly round, and, to my surprise and alarm, began to spread between me and the path which I had marked for our escape.

I gave a hurried glance along the ravine;

but Naomi was not there. A detachment of archers were climbing over the huge rocks that filled up its depth, and flashing their torches through every hollow where a human being could lie. Concealment was impossible, if they continued their search; but after a short period, the torches appeared to pass down an angle of the glen where some thickets allowed shelter.

To rescue my unfortunate charge, was my first resolve; and I began to let myself down the abrupt side of the hollow, before the torches disappeared. They at last seemed to be completely gone; but, as I hung within a few feet of the path, a growl and a dash at my throat nearly overthrew my steadiness. I knew that a precipice of immense depth lay underneath; and, in the utter darkness, I could have no certainty that my next step might not carry me over it. My sole expedient was to grasp the rock with one hand, and defend myself to the last with the other. The bloodhound had tracked me; and he flew again at my throat, but I was now prepared; I caught him in the bound, and whirled him down the ravine. His

howl, as he fell from crag to crag, detected me at once. A hundred torches rushed upwards. I climbed the pinnacle, sprang from its top into a pine thicket, and, winding over a long extent of broken ground, gradually lost torches and outcries together.

After a pause, to consider in what quarter final escape was most probable, a glimmering light through the thicket at a considerable distance towards the city determined me. My pursuers must be far behind: the loss of the bloodhound diminished still more their chance of reaching my track through a remarkably wild and broken district; and come what would, whether that light was kindled by friends or enemies, I should see them before they could discover me.

I struggled on, until I reached the base of a ridge, on whose further side the light gleamed. To ascend it, was beyond my powers; but, by gliding along the base, I found a crevice, which, enlarged, whether by nature or the human hand, led through the hill. My way in darkness was brief; I had not gone a third of the distance, when the light shone strongly through

the cavern. At its mouth, I stood overwhelmed. I had strayed into the memorable valley of the Crosses!

Thousands of men besmeared with blood, dust, and clay, half-naked, brandishing weapons still dripping with gore; whirling torches; shouting out roars of triumph; howling in desperate lamentation; trampling and tossing dead bodies with furious insult; kneeling and weeping over the dead with the most violent affliction; wrapping themselves in robes and armour; tearing away their raiment, and flinging sword and spear into the flames; throwing hundreds of corpses into one promiscuous burning, round which they danced with furious exultation; carrying away on litters of lances and branches corpses that they seemed to hallow as more than mortal; every strange variety of human passion wound up to its wildest height was pictured before me. And all was thrown into the most living distinctness by the blaze of an immense central heap of timber.

The horrid cruelties of the morning had been heard of in Jerusalem; and the spirit of the

people was roused to vengeance. With that imperishable courage which distinguished them above all nations, a defiance and scorn of hazard that in those unhappy days only urged them to their ruin, they determined to make the enemy pay in slaughter for the memory of their warriors. A multitude, without a leader, but among whom served with the simple spear many a leader, poured out from the gates to attack an enemy flushed with victory, and secured in intrenchments impregnable to the naked strength of my unfortunate countrymen.

They divided into two armies; one of which assaulted the lines, while the other marched to the valley of the Crosses. The assault on the lines was repelled, after long and desperate displays of intrepidity. It was the intelligence of this attack that had broken up the banquet. The Romans sustained heavy losses in the early part of the night; their outposts in the plain were sacrificed, and the chief part of their cantonments burned.

But the "army of vengeance," a name given to it alike by Jew and Roman, accomplished its

purpose with dreadful retribution. The legionaries posted to defend the valley were trampled down, and destroyed at the first charge. Detachment on detachment sent to extricate them, met with the same fate. One of the few prisoners described the valley, when his detachment reached its verge, as having the look of a living whirlpool, a vast and tempestuous rolling and heaving of infuriate life, into which the attempt to descend was instant destruction. "Every cohort that entered it," said the centurion, "was instantly ingulphed, and seen no more. Last night our legion, the fifteenth, lay down in their tents five thousand strong; to-night there are not ten of us on the face of the earth."

The conflict was long, and the last of the enemy were under the Jewish sword, when I reached the mouth of the cavern. But in the first intervals of the struggle, the remains of our tortured people had been taken down from the accursed tree, tended with solemn sorrow, and given up to their relatives and friends to be borne back to Jerusalem. The crosses were

thrown into a heap, and set on fire: the fallen legionaries underwent the last indignities that could be inflicted by scorn and rage; and when even those grew weary, were flung into the blazing pile.

The fate of the noble Eleazar was still unknown; and, to obtain the certainty of his preservation, or to render the last honour to his remains, I forced my way towards the spot on which I had seen him, awaiting death. But my researches were in vain: the witnesses on both sides were now where there is no utterance. Guard, executioner, and victim, were clay: the battle had raged chiefly round that spot; and the ground, trampled, and stained deep, gave melancholy evidence of the havock. There were painful and peculiar signs of the sacrifice that had extinguished the little group of the converts; and I poured oil and wine upon their hallowed ashes. A large fragment of a cross still stood erect in the midst of them. "Was it upon thee, accursed thing," I exclaimed, "that the life-blood of my brother was

poured? Was it upon thee, that the last breath was breathed in torture from the lips of virtue, heroism, and purity? Never shalt thou minister again to the cruelty of the monsters that raised thee there."

Indignantly I tore up the beam; and dragging it to the pile by my single strength—to the wonder of the crowd, who eagerly offered their help, but whom I would not suffer to share in this imaginary, yet consoling retribution—I rolled it into the flames, amid shouts and rejoicings.

Day-break was now at hand, and the sounds of the enemy's movements made our return necessary. We heaped the last Roman corpse on the pile; covered it with the broken spears, helmets, and cuirasses of the dead, and then left the care of the conflagration to the wind. From the valley to Jerusalem, our way was crowded with the enemy's posts; but the keen eye and agile vigour of the Jew eluded or anticipated the heavy-armed legionaries, by long experience taught to dread the night in Judea;

and we reached the Grand Gate of Sion, as the sun was shooting his first rays on the pinnacles of the Temple.

In those strange and agitated days, when every hour produced some extraordinary scene, I remember few more extraordinary than that morning's march into the city. It was a triumph! but how unlike all that bore the name! it was no idle, popular pageant; no fantastic and studied exhibition of trophies and treasures; no gaudy homage to personal ambition; no holiday show to amuse the idleness, or feed the vanity of a capital secure in peace, and pampered with the habits of opulence and national supremacy. But it was at once a rejoicing, a funeral, a great act of atonement, a popular preservation, whose results none could limit, and a proud revenge on the proudest of enemies.

That night not an eye had closed in Jerusalem. The Romans, quick to turn every change to advantage, had suffered the advance of our irregular combatants only until they could throw a force between them and the gates. The

assault was made, and with partial success; but the population once roused, was terrible to an enemy fighting against walls and ramparts, and the assailants were, after long slaughter on both sides, drawn off at the sight of our columns moving from the hills. We marched in, upwards of fifty thousand men, as wild and strange-looking a host as ever trod, to acclamations from voices unnumbered. Every casement, roof, battlement, and wall, in the long range of magnificent streets leading round by the foot of Sion to mount Moriah, was covered with spectators. Man, woman, and child, of every rank, were there, straining their eyes and voices, and waving hands, weapons, and banners for their deliverers from the terror of instant massacre. Our motley ranks had equipped themselves with the Roman spoils, where they could; and, among the ragged vestures, discoloured turbans, and rude pikes, moved masses of glittering mail, helmets, and gilded lances. Beside the torn flags of the tribes were tossing embroidered standards with the initials of the Cæsars, or the golden image of

some deity, mutilated by our scorn for the idolater. The Jewish trumpets had scarcely sent up their chorus, when it was followed by the clanging of the Roman cymbal, the long and brilliant tone of the clarion, or the deep roar of the brass conch and serpent. Close upon ranks exulting and shouting victory, came ranks bearing the honoured dead on litters, and bursting into bitter sorrow; then rolled onward thousands, bounding and showing the weapons and relics that they had torn from the enemy; then passed groups of the priesthood,—for they too had long taken the common share in the defence,—singing one of the glorious hymns of the Temple: then again followed litters surrounded by the wives and children of the dead, wrapt in inconsolable grief. Bands of warriors, who had none to care for, the habitual sons of the field; armed women; chained captives; beggars; men covered with the stately dresses of our higher ranks; biers heaped with corpses; waggons piled with armour, tents, provisions, the wounded, the dead; every diversity of human circumstance, person and equipment that belong

to a state in which the elements of society are let loose, in that march successively moved before the eye. With the men were mingled the captured horses of the legionaries; the camels and dromedaries of the allies; herds of the bull and buffalo, droves of goats and sheep; the whole one mighty mass of misery, rejoicing, nakedness, splendour, pride, humiliation, furious and savage life, and honoured and lamented death; the noblest patriotism, and the most hideous abandonment to the excesses of our nature.

As soon as I could extricate myself from the concourse, I hastened to appease the anxieties of my family; who had suffered the general terrors of the night, with the addition of their own stake in my peril, and that of Constantius. Esther had returned, and was still in nervous alarm. On the night of her being led, through filial zeal, to meet Septimius, she was seized by a party of armed men, and by them conveyed to a dungeon, where questions had been put to her tending to charge me at once with magic, and correspondence with the enemy. But no threatenings could influence her, and she found

herself as unexpectedly set at liberty as she had been seized. At the gate of her prison the minstrel had met her, and through the midst of the city, then in its fiercest agitation, had with singular dexterity conducted her safely home.

A service of this kind was not to go unrewarded, and he was suffered to remain under our roof until my return. But by that time he had made his ground secure by such zealous service, and so many graceful and valuable qualities, that even Miriam, sensitive and sagacious as she was, desired that he should be retained. From his knowledge of the various dialects of Asia, and his means of unsuspected intercourse, but few events could occur of which he had not obtained some previous knowledge. His adroitness in availing himself of his knowledge I had already experienced in my escape from the gates, and it was to him that was due the flight of the negroes. A stray charger, a mask, and the common juggler's contrivance of the breathing flames, made up the demon that defrauded the Ethiopian exchequer. But his dexterity in the arts of elegance and taste was singular: his

pencil was dipt in nature; and the sketches that he was perpetually making of the wild and picturesque population that now filled our streets were incomparable. He sculptured; he modelled; he wove; he wrought the gold filigree and chain-work for which our artists were famous, with a skill that the most famous might have envied. His knowledge of languages was the natural result of his wanderings, but it was extraordinarily various and pure. The dance and song were part of his profession; but from the little imperfect harp in use among the minstrels he drew tones that none other had ever delighted me with;—sounds of such alternate spirit and sweetness, such heart-reaching power, that they were like an immediate communication of mind with mind.

And the charm of those acquirements was enhanced by the graceful carelessness with which he made his estimate of their value. To my questions, how he could, at his age, have mastered so many attainments; his reply was, that, with his three teachers, "every thing might be learned, common sense alone excepted,

the peculiar and rarest gift of providence. Those three teachers were, Necessity, Habit, and Time. At his starting in life, Necessity had told him that, if he hoped to live, he must labour; Habit turned the labour into an indulgence; and Time gave every man an hour for every thing; unless he chose to yawn it away."

But he had higher topics; and the sagacity of his views, in a crisis that was made to shake the wisdom of the wise, often held me in astonishment. The fate of Constantius deeply perplexed me. He had now been absent three days: and no tidings of him could be heard among the returning warriors, further than that he had joined them in the march to the valley of the Crosses, had distinguished himself by the intrepidity of his attack on the legionary guard at the entrance, and was seen for a short time with a captured standard in his hand leading on the people.

Unable to endure the silent anguish of those round me, silent only through fear of giving pain, I had determined on passing the walls again, to seek my brave and unfortunate son

among the fallen. But Miriam's quick affection detected me, and with weeping prayers she implored that "I should not risk a life, on which hung her own and those of her children."

The sound of the lyre came soothingly upon the air, and to dissipate the cloud that was gathering on my mind, I wandered to a balcony, where, in the light of the evening sun, and the pleasant breathing of the breeze, the minstrel was touching the strings to the song that had first attracted me. I flung my wearied frame on a couch, and listened; till memory became too keen, and I waved my hand to him to change the strain. He obeyed; but his heart was in the harp no more; his touch faltered, the song died away, and he approached me with a soothingness of voice and manner that none would have desired to resist. "My prince, you are unhappy; and if your sorrows can be lightened by any service of mine, why not command me?" He waited; but I was too much absorbed in gloomy speculation. "I can pass the gates," he timidly continued, "if such be my lord's will." I made a sign of dis-

sent; for the enemy, since their late surprise, had begun to urge the siege with increased vigilance. Yet my anxiety for the fate of Constantius, and scarcely less for that of Naomi and her lover, must have been visible.

He still lingered nigh, watching the indications that inward struggle so forcibly paints upon the external man. "Prince of Naphtali," said he, in a steadier tone, "among my teachers, I forgot to mention one, and that one the most effective of all—Self-determination! not the mere disregard of personal risk, but the intrepidity of the mind. I loved knowledge, and I pursued it without fear. Nature is boundless, wise, and wonderful. But prejudice bars up the gate of knowledge. The man who would learn, must despise the timidity that shrinks from wisdom; he must hate the tyranny of opinion that condemns its pursuit. Wisdom is, like beauty, to be won only by the bold."

I looked up at the young pronouncer of the oracle. His countenance, animated by the topic, wore an expression of brilliancy and power, in which I should never have recog-

nised the delicate and dejected being that he always appeared, except in some moment of sportiveness, come and gone with the quickness of lightning.

"Minstrel, apply this to our people, or their bigoted and ignorant leaders. I have no prejudices."

"All men have them, my prince. And the only distinction is, that in some they are mean, dark, and malignant; in others they are lofty, generous, and feeling; yet they are but the stronger for their nobleness. The mind itself struggles to throw off the vile and naked fetter. But how many forget the incumbrance of the chain of gold in its preciousness!"—He hesitated, and then, with a still more elevated air, again began: "You despise, for instance, the little ingenuities of our profession, and I own that in general they deserve nothing else. But, if there were to come before you some true lover of nature, a disciple of that sublimer philosophy which holds the secrets of her operations; a master of those superb influences which rule the frame of things, and yet more, guide the fates

of men and nations; would not your prejudices, and noble ones they are, lead you to repel the offer of his knowledge?"

Thoughts tending to those mysteries had so often occurred to me, and my mind was by its original constitution so fond of the abstruse and the wild, that I listened with the interest of habitual pleasure to the romance of philosophy. The figure before me was not unsuited to the illusion; slight, habited in the fanciful dress of his art, a tunic of purple cloth, bound round the waist with a girdle; the turban, a mere band of scarlet silk, lightly laid upon his curls. There was in this nothing that was not to be seen at every hour in the streets; but, round his waist, instead of the usual girdle of the minstrels, he wore to-night a large golden serpent, embossed and coloured with a startling resemblance to life, and a broad golden circlet wrought with devices of serpents clasped his brow. But the countenance was vividness itself; not without that occasional wandering and touch of melancholy that showed where early care has been; yet redeeming the gloom

by a smile, that had the sweetness and suddenness of the sun-beam across an April shower.

The evening music of the Roman camps roused me; as their ranks were drawn out for the customary exercise. I turned from them to glance upon the battlements, that were now crowded with stragglers of the tribes inhaling the air of the fields, and like myself gazing on the movements of the enemy. The thought pressed on me, how soon and how terribly all this must end; what were the multitudes to be, that now lived and breathed beneath my glance? I turned from earth to look upon the west, where the evening star was lying on a rosy cloud, like a spirit sent to bring back tidings from this troubled world.

"There, boy," said I, "will your wisdom tell me the story of that star? Are its people as mad as we? Is there ambition on one side, and folly on the other? are their great men the prey of a populace, and their populace the tools and the fools of their great men? have they orators, to inflame their passions; lawyers, to beggar them in pursuit of justice; traders, to

cheat them; heroes, to give them laurels and vanity at the price of blood, hunger, and misery; and philosophers, to be the worst plagues among them—in the midst of perpetual wonders, and baffled by every pebble under their feet, insensible to their own ignorance; and with every attribute and voice of nature full of worship, wrapping themselves in the robe of the scorner, and refusing their homage to a God?"

"Even that knowledge," said the minstrel, "may not be beyond the flight of the human intellect; but prejudices must be first overcome: we must learn to scorn names, defy idle fears, and use the powers of nature to give us the mastery of nature. There are virtues in plants, in metals, even in words, that to seek alarms the feeble, but to possess constitutes the mighty. There are influences of the air, of the stars, of even the most neglected and despised things, that may be gifted to confer the sovereignty of mankind."

I listened with the passive indulgence of one listening under a spell: his voice had the sweetness and flow of song, and his language was

made impressive by gestures of striking intelligence and beauty. He pointed to the skies, to the flowers, to the horizon, that glowed like an ocean of amber; and his fine countenance assumed a new character of loftiness, loveliness, or repose, as he gazed on the sublime or the serene.

"Boy," said I, faintly, "are not those the studies by which the Pagan world is made evil?"

He smiled. "No! Light is not further from darkness than wisdom from the superstitions of the Pagan. Rome is filled with the madness that falls upon idolatry for its curse—that has fallen since the beginning of the world—that shall fall until its end. She is the slave of spiritual fear. This hour, among the proudest, boldest, wisest, within the borders of Paganism, there lives not a man unenslaved by the lowest delusion. The soothsayer, the interpreter of dreams, the sacrificer, the seller of the remnants and dust of the dead, the miserable pretender to magic; those are the true rulers of the haughty empire—those are the sceptre-bearers, to whom the emperor is a me-

nial; who laugh at authority, set counsel at nought, and are sapping the foundations of the state, were they deep as the centre, by sapping the vigour and virtue of the national mind."

While he spoke, he was, with apparent unconsciousness, sketching some outlines on one of the large marble-slabs of the wall. My eyes had followed the sun, until the balcony, darkened by an old vine, was in the depth of twilight. To my surprise, the marble began to be covered with fire; but fire of the softest and most silvery hue. The surprise was increased, by seeing this glow-worm lustre kindle into form. I saw Constantius; and by his side Naomi and her lover. As the lines grew clearer still, I saw them in chains, and in a dungeon!

The extraordinary information which the minstrel had the means of obtaining, made me demand, in real alarm, whether the picture were true; and that, if it were, I should be instantly acquainted with whatever might enable me to save them.

"And trifles like those fires can excite your astonishment?" he replied.—"What if I were to

tell you of wonders, such as it has not entered into the mind of the world to conceive; yet, which are before us every hour of our lives, are mingled with every thing, are grasped in our insensate hands, are trodden by our careless feet? See these crystals—" he scraped a portion of the nitre exuding from the wall;—" in these is hidden a power to which the strength of man is but air—to which the mighty bulwarks round us are but as the leaf on the breeze—at whose command armies shall vanish, mountains shake, empires perish—the whole face of society shall change;—yet, by a sublime contradiction, combining the greatest evil with the greatest good—the most lavish waste of life and happiness, with the most signal provision for human security and civilization!"

"Look on this metal," said he, pointing to some of the leaden ornaments of the balcony; "and think what is the worth of human judgment. Who would give the pearl or the diamond, the silver or the gold, for this discoloured dross? Yet here is the king of metals—the king of earth: for it can create, subdue, and rule all

that earth produces of nobleness and power. Within this dross are treasures hidden, more than earth could buy—truth, knowledge, and freedom.—It can give the dead a new life, and give the living a new immortality.—It can stoop the haughtiest usurper that ever sinned against man into the lowest scorn.—It can raise the humblest son of obscurity into pre-eminence; and, even without breaking in upon the seclusion that he loves, make him the benefactor of the human race, and set him forth crowned to every future age with involuntary glory.—It can flash light upon the darkest corners of the earth; light never to be extinguished. It can civilize the barbarian: it can pour perpetual increase of happiness, strength, and liberty, round the civilized.—It can make feet to itself that walk through the dungeon-walls; wings that the uttermost limits of the world cannot weary; eyes to which the darkest concealments of evil are naked as the day; intellect that darts through the universe, and grasps the mightiest mysteries of nature and of mind! But in it too is a fearful power of

ruin. Holding the keys of opulence and empire, it can raise men and nations to the most dazzling height. But it can stain, delude, and madden them, until they become a worse than pestilence to human nature."

While he spoke, his form assumed a grandeur commensurate to his lofty topics; the power of his voice awoke with the awaking power of his mind. My faculties succumbed under his presence, and I could only exclaim: "More of those wonders; give me more of those noble evidences of the supremacy of man!"

"Man!" said my strange enlightener; "look upon him as he is; and what more helpless thing moves under the canopy of heaven? The prey of folly, the creature of accident, the sport of nature; the surge whirls him where it will; the wind scorns his bidding; the storm crushes him; the lightning smites him. But, look upon man, when Knowledge has touched him with her sceptre."—He fixed upon me eyes, from which I thought that the very lightnings gleamed. The circlet round his brow seemed to quiver

and sparkle with inward lustre; the golden serpent that clasped his robe seemed to writhe and revolve. I felt like one under its fascination. A sense of danger thrilled through me, yet mixed with a dreamy and luxurious sense of enjoyment. The air was heavy with fragrance; and I sat listening in powerless homage to a lip moulded by beauty and disdain.

"Man, the sport of nature!" said he; pointing to a bead of dew that hung glittering on a leaf of the vine. "Say, man the sovereign of nature! With but so feeble an instrument as this dew-drop, he might control and scorn the wind and the wave!—Or would you defy the storm in darkness; without sun or star speed through the unknown ocean; and add a new world to the old? Within this fragment lies the secret." He struck off a brown splinter from the stone of the balcony.—"Or would you behold regions, to which the stars that now blaze above our heads are but the portal; kingdoms of light never penetrated by mortal vision; generations

of worlds? By what splendid influence think you that the miracle is to be wrought? Even by this dust!" He took up a few grains of the sand at his feet, and poured them into my robe. He saw his time. "Would you," exclaimed he, "be master of those magnificent secrets? But bind this girdle round you, and invoke the name that I shall name."

I shuddered; the arts of the diviner flashed upon me. But I had listened too long not to be enfeebled by the temptation. I felt the passion which lost us paradise—the thirst of forbidden knowledge. "Ye shall be as gods," was echoing in my soul! Still I resisted. The young deceiver urged me with more distinct promises. "In your fate," said he, "the fate of your nation is bound up. Has it not been declared that a great deliverer is to come, by whom the face of the enemies of Judah is to be withered, and the kingdom and the sceptre of the earth given back to the hand of Israel? Pledge yourself to me, and be that deliverer!—You shrink! Know then, that while I speak, every creature

of your blood is in chains; your house is desolate; your fortunes are overthrown; you are cut off, root and branch; you are exiled—desperate—undone."

I felt a dreadful certainty that his words were true. My heart bled at the picture of ruin. I wavered. The temptation tingled through my veins. "What was the sacrifice of myself," thought I, "wretched and sentenced as I was, to the preservation of beings made for happiness? Or, was I to hesitate, let the risk be what it might, when virtue, patriotism, and boundless knowledge, were added to that preservation? For the trivial honours that man could give to man, the highest intellects of the earth had been influenced; but the honours of the restorer of Judah were an immortal theme,—the old splendours of triumph were pronounced vain and dim, the old supremacy of thrones weakness to the domination and grandeur of the sovereign that should sway the returning tribes of Sion."

The figure approached me; and in a voice

that sank with subtle force through every nerve, pronounced the vow that I was to utter. I was terror-struck; a cloud came over my sight; strange lights moved and glittered before me. I felt the unspeakable dread that my faculties should betray me, and that I should unconsciously yield to a temptation, which yet I had no strength to withstand.

While I sat helpless and almost blind, I was aroused by a majestic voice. I looked up. Eleazar was at my side. I would have flung myself into his arms; I would have cast myself at his feet. But there was an indescribable sensation that told me, my noble brother was to be so approached no more. "Well and wisely hast thou resisted," were his solemn words. "For in thee are the last fortunes of thy people. Judea must fall: but, fallen with her as thou shalt be; and desolate, despairing, and wild, as shall be thy sojourn; the last blow of ruin to both would be given, hadst thou yielded to the adversary." I glanced at the minstrel. His visage was horror: he stood deformed, like one

dead in the moment of torture. I closed my eyes against the hideous spectacle.—A sound of hurrying steps made me open them the next instant.—I was alone!

CHAPTER XXII.

THE sounds of the footsteps thickened. Exhausted and overwhelmed as I was by the trial that my mind had just undergone, I sat nearly unconscious of external things, till I was roused by a strong grasp from behind, and saw myself surrounded by armed men. I was passively bound; and, indifferent to fortune, was flung into a litter, and conveyed to the dungeons of the Tower of Antonia. In this vast circle of fortifications, the citadel of the former Roman garrison, the Jewish government was now held, or rather Onias lorded it over the population. He had discovered my dwelling; and the first fruit of his knowledge

was my seizure and that of my family. He was now playing the last throw of that desperate game to which his life had been given. Power was within his reach, yet there I stood to thwart him once more; and he was resolved to extinguish the first source of his danger. Yet I was popular, and, with all his daring, he desired to cast the odium of my death on the Sanhedrim. I was to be tried on the ground of treating with the enemy; my family were seized, to shake my courage by their peril; and I was to be forced to an ignominious confession, as the price of saving their lives.

At the mouth of the dungeon a torch was put into my hands. I was left to make my way; and the iron door was closed, that had shut out many a wretch from light and life. At the bottom of the steps I found a man sleeping tranquilly on the bare stone. The glare of the torch disturbed him; he started up, and looking in my face, exclaimed in the buoyant and cheerful tone, by which I should have recognised him under any disguise, "By Jupiter, I knew that we were to meet! If I

had to sleep to-night at the bottom of the sea, I should wager my scimitar to a straw that our bodies would be found lying side by side. I presume we mount the scaffold together to-morrow, for the benefit of Jewish morality. Well then, since our fates are to be joined, let us begin by—supping together."

He laid his store on the ground; but I was heart-sick; and could only question him of Naomi and the misfortune which had betrayed him into the hands of the tyrant. "Our history is the briefest in the world," was the answer. "We found ourselves pursued, and we fled. The pursuers followed faster than my fair mistress could run, or I could carry her. So, we were overtaken before we could clear the rocks. And our captors were forthwith carrying us to the Roman camp in great joy at their prize. But it was intended to be an unlucky day for the legions. We came across a Jewish troop headed by a fine bold fellow, who dashed upon the captors, and fluttered them like a flight of pigeons. Nothing could promise better than the affair; for my new captor turned out

to be an old friend, and one of the most gallant that ever commanded a trireme. Many a day the Cypriot and I chased (Nemesis forgive us for it!) the pirates through the Cyclades: I, however, did not know then what pleasant personages the brothers of the free-trade might be." He smiled; and the sigh that followed the smile, told how little he had since found to compensate for his old adventures.

"Your captor was my son, my heroic Constantius?" I exclaimed.

"The very man. When he had found me out under my Arab trappings, he was all hospitality, and invited me to share the honours of his princely father's house. His troop soon scattered, every man to his home; and I was gazing at the head of an incomparable knave and early acquaintance, Jonathan, nailed up over the gate for some villany which he had not been as adroit as usual in turning to profit; when Constantius, myself, and that lovely and innocent girl, whom I shall never see more"—he stooped his brow at the recollection—"were seized by the

guard, separated, and sent, I suppose, alike to the dungeon."

Shortly after midnight I was brought before the tribunal. Onias was my accuser, and I was astonished at the dexterity, number, and plausibility of his charges—magic, treachery, denial of my services to the country, the betrayal of my army, the refusal to push the defeated enemy to a surrender, lest by the cessation of the war my ambition should be deprived of its object; and last, and most astonishing, the assassination of my kinsman Jubal, through fear of his testimony.

I made my defence with the fearlessness of one weary of life, and with the force of truth. Some of the charges I explained; others I promptly and effectually repelled. To the imputation of treachery I answered in a single sentence — "Read that correspondence with the enemy, and judge, which is the traitor." I took the Egyptian's papers from my sash, and flung them on the table.

The aspect of my accuser at the words was

one that might have made his sternest hater pity him. He gasped—he trembled—he gnashed his teeth in rage and terror; and, finally, took refuge in the ranks of his followers. But the judges themselves were in visible perplexity: they looked over the papers, held them to the lamps, and examined them in all imaginable ways; until the chief of the Sanhedrim rising, with a frown that fixed all eyes on me, flung the papers at my feet. The deepest silence was round me as I took up the rejected proofs. To my astonishment, they were utterly blank!

I now recollected that, on my entrance, I had been pressed upon by the crowd. In that moment the false papers must have been substituted. I saw the Egyptian gliding away from the side of Onias, and saw by the countenance of my accuser that the tidings of the robbery had just reached him. He rose, and declaimed against me with renewed energy. He was eloquent by nature: the habit of public affairs had given even the form of his speaking that character of practical vigour and reality, which is essential to great public impression:

his passions were inflamed; his fortunes hung in the scale—perhaps his life; and he poured out the whole collected impulse in a torrent of the boldest and most nervous declamation upon my head. But my name was high; my rank was not to be lightly assailed; my national services were felt; and even the corrupt judicature summoned for my ruin, were not so insensible to popular feeling, as to violate the forms of law to crush me. The trial lasted during the night. I had the misery to see my wife, my children, Constantius, Naomi, my domestics, my fellow-warriors, every human being whom there was a chance of perplexing or terrifying into testimony, brought forward against me. As a last resource, on the secret suggestion of the Egyptian, who had his own revenge to satisfy, the adventures of the pirates' cavern were declaimed upon; and the captain was summoned from his cell. His figure and noble physiognomy made him conspicuous, and a general murmur of admiration arose on his advance to the tribunal. Miriam was at my side. I felt her tremble; her colour went and

came; and she drank in every tone of his voice with an intense anxiety. But when, in answer to the questions of Onias, he detailed his story, and in answer to the charge of his being an enemy, denied that he was either Roman or Greek, Miriam's spirit hung upon every word.

"A soldier's best pedigree," said he, concluding, "is his sword. I know no more than that I was reared in the house of a Cypriot noble, to whom I had been brought by a trader of Alexandria. My protector made me a sailor, and would have made me his heir; but Roman insolence disgusted me, and I left my command; bearing with me no other inheritance than a heart too proud for slavery, my scimitar, and this signet, which I have worn from my infancy." He took from his bosom a large sculptured gem, fastened to a chain of pearls. Miriam put forth her trembling hand for it, read, with a starting eye, her own name and mine, and exclaiming, "My son! my son!" tottered forward, and fell fainting into his arms.

I flew to them both, and never did my woe-worn heart beat with keener joy than when I

too clasped my son, my long-lost, my first-born. Yet clouds gathered instantly.—Was he not come to take the earliest embrace of his parents, in the crisis of their fate,—the promise of an unbroken lineage, given in the days when my country was in the jaws of destruction;—the son, the brother, the husband, awaking to those loveliest and happiest ties of our nature, only when the axe of the traitor, or the sword of the enemy, was uplifted to cut them asunder for ever;—the prince, the patriot, the warrior, summoned to the first exercise of his noble rights and duties, when in the next hour a heap of dust might be all that was left of himself, his family, and his people!

I clung to him with a fondness thirsting to repay its long arrear. His desertion in the hands of strangers; the early hardships; the loss of a mother's love and a father's protection; the insults and privations that the struggler through the world must bear; the desperate hazards of his life; even the errors into which necessity and circumstance had driven him, rose up in judgment against me; and I re-

proached myself for the accident, perhaps the irresistible accident, that gave my infant to the roaring waters.

But the tears and exclamations of the people round us recalled us. I might then have walked from the hall without any man's daring to lay a hand upon me; for the public feeling, touched by the discovery of my son, was loud for my instant liberation. But I was not to be satisfied with this imperfect justice, and demanded that the tribunal should proceed.

The presence of my family was felt to be too strong for the fears of my accuser; and, demanding no defence but truth, I implored of them to retire. An impression, like that of the warning of a superior spirit, struck on my mind as I pronounced the word. It told me that I had spoken the sentence of utter separation. They came hand in hand to bid me farewell. Constantius and Salome knelt before me for final forgiveness. My son and his betrothed bowed their heads to ask my blessing. Miriam and Esther came last, and silently

hung upon my neck, dissolved in tears of matchless anguish and love. I lifted my eyes and heart to Heaven, and, though oppressed with the terrible convictions of my own fate, prayed for them, and put forth my hands, and blessed them in the name of the God of Israel. I saw them pass away. My firmness could bear no more: I wept aloud. But with my sorrow there was given a hope—a light across the gloom of my soul. When I saw their stately forms solemnly move along through the fierce and guilty multitude, and the distant portal shut upon them; I thought of the sons and daughters of the great patriarch, passing within the door of the ark from the midst of a condemned world.

The night was worn out; the people exhausted by the length of a trial, protracted for the purpose, had left the hall nearly empty; and Onias, now secure of a tribunal that dreaded nothing but the public eye, urged the decision. The judges were his creatures, through corruption or fear; his followers alone remained. Sure to be crushed, the fluctua-

tions of hope were gone; and I listened to the powerful and high-wrought harangue of my enemy without a movement but of admiration for his extraordinary powers, or of pity for their perverter. While he stood drinking in with ears and eyes the wonder and homage of the audience, I myself called for sentence. "Scorning," said I, "to reason with understandings that will not comprehend, and consciences that cannot feel, I appeal from the man of blood, to the God of mercies; from the worse than man of blood, from the corrupter of justice, to HIM who shall judge the judge; to the Mighty and the Holy One, who shall yet pass sentence in the sight of earth and heaven."

The chief assessor rose; my condemnation was upon a lip quivering and pale: he had already in his hands the border of the robe which he was to rend, in sign that the accused was rent from Israel. A confusion at the portal checked him; and the words resounded, "Beware! shed not the innocent blood." The voice was as a voice from the sepulchre; deep, melancholy, but searching to the very heart.

The guard gave way, and a man covered from head to foot with a sepulchral garment rushed up the immense hall. At the foot of the tribunal he flung off the garment, and disclosed a face and form that well might have ranked him among the dwellers of the grave.

"I have come from the tombs," exclaimed he: "I had lain down to die in the resting-place of my fathers, in the valley of Jehosaphat. A man in white raiment stood beside me, and commanded me to come, and bear witness of the truth. The Romans were round me, he led me through them;—the battlements were before me, he led me through them;—riot, fury, and frenzy stood in my path through your city, he led me through them;—and lo! here I come, and proclaim by his command, 'Beware!—shed not the innocent blood.'" Onias stood paralysed. No memory of mine could recall the haggard features of the stranger. The chief of the tribunal, in manifest confusion, required his name. "My name," he answered, with a wild wave of his hand, "is nothing—air—is gone. What I was, is past; what I shall be, the tomb

alone must tell: but what I am, is the witness commissioned to proclaim Onias the betrayer of the blood of your nobles—the slave of Rome —the traitor to his country and his religion." All hands were lifted up in astonishment. Onias, sick at heart, made a feeble gesture of denial. "Dares the traitor deny his own hand-writing?" was the indignant reply. "Let him read his treason, committed within these twelve hours." He stalked over to the guilty Onias, and held his letters to the Roman general before his shrinking eye.

But what was his truth or falsehood to me? I was marked for vengeance. While my eyes were fixed on the portal through which had vanished my last hope of happiness, I was startled by an outcry; and I saw the gleam of steel at my throat. Onias, in despair of smiting me by the arm of the law, had made a frenzied effort to destroy me by his own. Quick as lightning the stranger threw himself between us, and grasped the assassin; they struggled—they were involved in the large and loose robe, and fell together. I dashed forward to separate them. But the

deed was done. Onias lay rolling upon the ground; the dagger was in the stranger's grasp, and it was crimson to the hilt. I could feel no vindictiveness against the dying, and I offered him my hand. He threw a violent expression of scorn into his stiffening features; and cried at convulsive intervals—" No compassion—no hypocrisy for me—I die as I lived. I hated you, for you thwarted me.—You have the best of the game now; but if I had lived till to-morrow, I should have been lord of Jerusalem.—The Romans will settle all.—You and yours would have been in my power.—You shall perish.—That boy is your son; he was brought to me in his infancy; I hated you as my rival; and I swore that you should never see your first-born again.—I sold him to the Alexandrian.—You shall not live to triumph over me; your dungeon shall be your tomb; another night, and you sleep no more, or sleep for ever." He gathered his mantle over his face, and died.

His followers, after the first consternation, demanded vengeance on the stranger. But it was now my time to protect him, and I insisted

on his right of self-defence, and declared that no man should strike him but through me. "This is noble and generous," interrupted he, "but useless. I too am dying. But I rejoice that I am dying by the wound meant for you. Have I at last atoned? Have you forgotten? Can you forgive? Then, prince of Naphtali, lay your hand upon this heart, and, while it beats, believe that there you are honoured. Time has changed me; misery has extinguished the last trace of what I was.—Farewell, my kinsman, friend, chieftain; and remember—Jubal." I caught him in my arms; my heart melted at his sufferings—his generous attachment—his heroic devotion—his deep repentance. "You have more than atoned," I exclaimed; "you are more than forgiven. Live, my manly, kind, high-hearted Jubal; live for the honour of your race—of your country—of human nature. He looked up with a smile of gratitude, and faintly uttering, "I die happy," breathed in my arms the last breath of one of the most gallant spirits that ever left the world.

Loud shouts abroad, and blazes that coloured

the roof with long columns of lurid light, put an end to the deliberation of the tribunal. The enemy were assaulting the citadel; and the mockery of justice was summarily closed by returning me to my dungeon, to await times fitter for the calmness of judicial murder.

The assault continued for some hours; but to my cavern, sunk in the very foundations of the fortress, day never came; and I lay, still buried in darkness, when I heard sounds like the blows of pickaxes; and from time to time the fall of heavy bodies, followed by a roar. The air grew close; and, chill as the dungeon had been, I experienced a sensation of heat still more painful. The heat increased rapidly. I tried to avoid it by shifting my place in the large vault, which had been originally a granary. But the evil was not to be baffled; the air grew hotter and hotter. I flung myself on the pavement to draw a cool breath from the stones: they began to glow under me. I ran to the door of the dungeon: it was iron, and the touch scorched me. In alarm at the most hideous of all deaths, I shouted, I tore at the walls, at the

massive rings in the floor, less perhaps from the hope of thus escaping, than from the vague eagerness to deaden present pain by violent effort. But I tore up the pavement, and shook down the fragments of the walls, in vain. The walls themselves began to split with the heat; smoke eddied through the crevices of the immense stones; and the dungeon was filled with fiery vapour. My raiment encumbered me; I tore it away, and, on the floor, saw it fall in ashes. I felt the agonies of suffocation; and at last, helpless and hopeless, threw myself down, like my raiment, to be consumed.

I had scarcely touched the stone, when I felt it shake and vibrate from side to side. A hollow noise like distant thunder echoed through the vault: the walls shook, collapsed, opened, and I was plunged down a chasm, and continued rolling for some moments in a whirl of stones, dust, earth, and smoke. When it subsided, I found myself lying on the green sward, in noon-day, at the bottom of a valley, with the tower of Antonia covered with the legionaries, five hundred feet above me.

The remnants of huge fires round pillars of timber explained the mystery. The enemy had undermined the wall; and, by burning the props, had brought it down at the time of their assault. Onias, the planner of the attack, for which he was to be repaid with the procuratorship of Judea, had placed me in the spot where ruin was to begin, and cheered his dying moments with the certainty that, acquitted or not, there I must be undone.

I long lay contused and powerless among the ruins. But the twilight air revived me; and I crept through the deserted intrenchments of the enemy, until I reached one of the gates; where I announced my name, and was received with rejoicings.

The heart of my countrymen was heroic to the last, and deeply was its heroism now demanded; for the whole force of the enemy had been brought up for final assault; and when I entered, every portion of the walls was the scene of unexampled battle. Where the ground suffered the approach of troops, the enemy's columns, headed by archers and slingers in-

numerable, rushed to the rampart, climbing up the breaches with their shields over their heads. Against the towers were wheeled towers filled with troops, who descended on the wall, and fought us hand to hand. We felt the perpetual blows of the battering-rams shaking the battlements under our feet. Where the ground repelled direct assault, there the military machines poured havock, and those were the most dreaded of all.

The skill of man, exerted for ages on the arts of compendious slaughter, has scarcely produced the equals of those horrible engines. They threw masses of unextinguishable fire, of boiling water, of burning oil, of red-hot flints, of molten metal, from distances that precluded defence, and with a force that nothing could resist. The catapult shot stones of a hundred weight from the distance of furlongs, with the straightness of an arrow, and with an impulse that ground every thing in their way to powder. The fortitude that scorned the Roman spear, and exulted in the sight of the columns mounting the scaling-ladders, as mounting to sure destruction, quailed before the

tremendous power of the catapult. The singular and ominous cry of the watcher that gave notice of its discharge, "The son cometh," was a sound that prostrated every man upon his face, until the crash of the walls told that the blow was given.

Every thought that I had now for earth was in the tower of Antonia. But there the legions rendered approach impossible; and I could only gaze from a distance, and see, in the bitterness of my soul, the enemy gradually forcing their way from rampart to rampart. It was in vain that I strove to collect a few who would join me in a desperate attempt to succour its defenders. I was left alone; and sadly sitting on the battlements, I took the chance of some friendly spear or stone. Through all the roar I heard the voice of Sabat the Ishmaelite; the eternal "Woe!—woe!—woe!" loud as ever, and in appalling unison with the hour. He came rushing along the wall with the same rapid and vigorous stride as of old; but his betrothed no longer followed him. She was borne in his arms! The stones from the engines thundered against the wall; they tore up the strong buttresses like

weeds; they struck away whole ranks of men, and whirled their remnants through the air. They levelled towers, and swept battlements away with their defenders at a blow. But Sabat moved unshrinking on his wild mission. His cry was terrible prophecy. "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against this whole people."

He stopped before me; and pointing to the face of his bride, said with sudden faltering and tears, "She is gone, she is dead.—She died last twilight.—I promised to die too.—She follows me no more; it is I that must follow her." Death was in his face; and my only wonder was, that a form so utterly reduced could live and move. I offered him some provision from the basket of a dead soldier at my feet. For the first time, he took it, thanked me, and ate. Not less to my surprise, he continued gazing round him on the movements of the enemy, on the temple, the tower of Antonia, and the hills.

But his station was eminently perilous, and I pointed out one of the largest of the military engines taking its position to play upon the spot where we were. He refused to stir. "The look may be long," said he, "when a man looks his last." I heard the roar of the engine, and leaped from the rampart, to escape the discharge. Sabat stood, and again began his cry: "Woe to the city, and to the holy house, and to the people." The discharge tore up a large portion of the battlement. Sabat never moved limb nor feature. The wall was cut away on his right and left, as if it had been cut with an axe. He stood calmly on the projecting fragment, with his lips to the lips of his bride. I saw the engine levelled again, and again called to him to escape. He gave me no answer but a melancholy smile; and crying out with a voice that filled the air, "Woe, to myself!" stood. I heard the rush of the stone. It smote Sabat and his bride into atoms!

The fall of our illustrious and unhappy city was supernatural. The destruction of the conquered was against the first principles of

Roman polity; and, to the last hour of our national existence, Rome held out offers of peace, and lamented our frantic determination to be undone. But the decree was gone forth from a mightier throne. During the latter days of the siege, a hostility, to which that of man was as the grain of sand to the tempest that drives it on, overpowered our strength and senses. Fearful shapes and voices in the air; visions startling us from our short and troubled sleep; lunacy in its most hideous forms; sudden death in the midst of vigour; the fury of the elements let loose upon our unsheltered heads; we had every terror and evil that could beset human nature, but pestilence; the most probable of all in a city crowded with the famishing, the diseased, the wounded and the dead. Yet, though the streets were covered with the unburied; though every wall and trench was teeming; though six hundred thousand corpses lay flung over the rampart, and naked to the sun—pestilence came not; for if it had come, the enemy would have been scared away. But the "abomination of desolation," the pagan standard, was fixed; where

it was to remain until the plough passed over the ruins of Jerusalem!

On this night, this fatal night, no man laid his head upon his pillow. Heaven and earth were in conflict. Meteors burned above us; the ground shook under our feet; the volcano blazed; the wind burst forth in irresistible blasts, and swept the living and the dead in whirlwinds far into the desert. We heard the bellowing of the distant Mediterranean, as if its waters were at our side, swelled by a new deluge. The lakes and rivers roared, and inundated the land. The fiery sword shot out tenfold fire. Showers of blood fell. Thunder pealed from every quarter of the heaven. Lightning in immense sheets, of an intensity and duration that turned the darkness into more than day, withering eye and soul, burned from the zenith to the ground, and marked its track by forests on flame, and the shattered summits of the hills.

Defence was unthought of; for the mortal enemy had past from the mind. Our hearts quaked for fear. But it was, to see the powers of heaven shaken. All cast away the shield and

the spear, and crouched before the descending judgment. We were conscience-smitten. Our cries of remorse, anguish, and horror, were heard through the uproar of the storm. We howled to the caverns to hide us; we plunged into the sepulchres, to escape the wrath that consumed the living; we would have buried ourselves under the mountains.

I knew the cause, the unspeakable cause; and knew that the last hour of crime was at hand. A few fugitives, astonished to see one man among them not sunk into the lowest feebleness of fear, came round me, and besought me to lead them to some place of safety, if such were now to be found on earth. I told them openly, that they were to die; and counselled them to die in the hallowed ground of the Temple. They followed; and I led them, through streets encumbered with every shape of human suffering, to the foot of Mount Moriah. But beyond that, we found advance impossible. Piles of cloud, whose darkness was palpable even in the midnight in which we stood, covered the holy hill. Impatient, and not to be

daunted by any thing that man could overcome, I cheered my disheartened band, and attempted to lead the way up the ascent. But I had scarcely entered the cloud, when I was swept downward by a gust, that tore the rocks in a flinty shower round me.

Now came the last and most wondrous sign, that marked the fate of rejected Israel.

While I lay helpless, I heard the whirlwind roar through the cloudy hill; and the vapours began to revolve. A pale light, like that of the rising moon, quivered on their edges; and the clouds rose, and rapidly shaped themselves into the forms of battlements and towers. The sound of voices was heard within, low and distant, yet strangely sweet. Still the lustre brightened, and the airy building rose, tower on tower, and battlement on battlement. In awe that held us mute, we knelt and gazed upon this more than mortal architecture, that continued rising and spreading, and glowing with a serener light, still soft and silvery, yet to which the broadest moon-beam was dim. At last, it stood forth to earth and heaven the colossal

image of the first Temple, of the building raised by the wisest of men, and consecrated by the visible glory. All Jerusalem saw the image; and the shout that in the midst of their despair ascended from its thousands and tens of thousands, told what proud remembrances were there. But a hymn was heard, that might have hushed the world beside. Never fell on my ear, never on the human sense, a sound so majestic, yet so subduing; so full of melancholy, yet of grandeur and command. The vast portal opened, and from it marched a host, such as man had never seen before, such as man shall never see but once again; the guardian angels of the city of David!—they came forth glorious; but with woe in all their steps; the stars upon their helmets dim; their robes stained; tears flowing down their celestial beauty. "Let us go hence," was their song of sorrow.—"Let us go hence," was answered by the sad echoes of the mountains.—"Let us go hence," swelled upon the night, to the farthest limits of the land. The procession lingered long on the summit of the

hill. The thunder pealed; and they rose at the command, diffusing waves of light over the expanse of heaven. Their chorus was heard, still magnificent and melancholy, when their splendour was diminished to the brightness of a star. Then the thunder roared again; the cloudy temple was scattered on the winds; and darkness, the omen of her grave, settled upon Jerusalem.

I was roused from deep reverie by the voice of a man. "What!" said he, "sitting here, when all the world is awake? Poring over the faces of dead men, when you should be the foremost among the living? All Jerusalem in arms; and yet you scorn your time to gain laurels?" The haughty and sarcastic tone was familiar to my recollection; but to see, as I did, a Roman soldier within a few feet of me, was enough to make me spring up, and draw my scimitar, careless of countenances. "You ought to know me," said he, without moving a muscle; "for, though it is some years since we met, we have not been often asunder. And so, here you have

been sitting these twelve hours among corpses, to no better purpose than losing your time and your memory together!"

I looked round; the sun was in his meridian! The little band that I had led to the foot of the mountain, were lying dead to a man.

"Are you not a Roman?" I exclaimed.

"No; but I conclude, that nearly as much absurdity and mischief may be committed under these trappings as under any other; and therefore I wear them. But you may change with me if you like. This cuirass and falchion will help you to money, riot, violence, and vice; and what more do nine-tenths of mankind ask for in their souls? Take my offer, and you will be on the winning side; another thing that men like. But be expeditious; for before this sun dips his forehead in the Asphaltites, the bloodshed and robbery will be over." His laugh, as he uttered the words, was bitterness itself; and I felt my flesh instinctively shudder. But a glance towards the Temple told me that the words were true. The legions had forced their way to the foot of the third and weakest rampart,

which I saw flying in pieces under the blows of the battering-rams. They must have marched by the very spot where I sat since midnight; and I probably escaped only by being taken for one of the dead. I wrung my hands in agony. He burst into a wild roar of derision. "What fools you lords of the creation are! What is the loss of life to the naked wretches that you see running about like frightened children on those battlements? or to the clothed wretches that you see ready to massacre them for the honour and glory of a better-clothed wretch?—a dinner too much will revenge them on the emperor of the earth. The spear or the arrow comes; and quick as thought their troubles are at an end. Man!—the true misery is to live, to be constrained to live, to feel the wants, wearinesses, and weaknesses of life, yet to drag on existence; to be —— what I am."

He tore the helmet from his forehead, and with a start of inward pain flung it to a measureless distance in the air. In amaze and terror, I beheld Epiphanes! The same Greek countenance, the same kingly presence, the

same strength and heroic stature, and the same despair, were before me, that in the early years of my woe I had seen on the shores of the Dead Sea. "I told you," said he, with a sudden return to calmness, "that this day would come. And to tell you so, required no spirit of prophecy. There is a time for all things; long-suffering among the rest; and your countrymen had long ago come to that time. But, one grand hope was still to be given; they cast it from them! Ages on ages shall pass, before they learn the loftiness of that hope, or fulfil the punishment of that rejection. Yet, in the fulness of time, shall the light break in upon their darkness. They shall ask, Why are we the despised, the branded, the trampled, the abjured of all nations? Why are the barbarian and the civilised alike our oppressors? Why do contending faiths join in crushing us alone? Why do realms, distant as the ends of the earth, and diverse as day and night,—alike those who have heard our history, and those who have never heard of us but as the sad sojourners of the earth,—unite in one cry of

scorn? And what is the universal voice of nature, but the voice of the King of nature?"

I listened in reverence, to language that pierced my heart with an intense power of truth, yet with a pang that made me writhe. I longed, yet dreaded, to hear again the searching and lofty accents of this being of unwilling wisdom. "Man of terrible knowledge," said I, "canst thou tell for what crime this judgment shall come?"

His mighty brow was stooped in solemn fear, and his features quivered, as he slowly spoke.—"Their crime? There is no name for it. The spirits of Heaven weep when they think of it. The spirits of the abyss tremble. Man alone, the man of Judea alone, could commit that horror of horrors."

He paused, and prostrated himself at the words. Then rising, rapidly uttered—"Judge of the crime by its punishment. From the beginning Israel was stubborn, and his stubbornness brought him to sorrow. He rebelled, and he was warned by the captivity of a monarch, or the slaughter of a tribe.—He sinned

more deeply, for he was the slave of impurity; then was his kingdom divided; yet a few years saw him powerful once more.—He sinned more deeply still; for he sought the worship of idols. Then came his deeper punishment, in the fall of his throne, and the long captivity of his people. But even Babylon sent back the forgiven to his throne.

"Happy, I say to you, happy will be the hour for Israel—for mankind—for creation; when he shall take into his hand the records of his fathers, and in tears and prayers ask—What is that greater crime than rebellion? than blasphemy? than impurity? than idolatry? which not seventy years, nor a thousand years of sorrow have seen forgiven; which has prolonged his woe into the old age of the world—which threatens him with a chain, not to be broken but by the thunder-stroke that breaks up the universe!"

"And still," said I, trembling, and subdued before the living oracle—"still is there hope?"

"Look to that mountain," was the answer,

as he pointed to Moriah. Its side, covered with the legions advancing to the assault, shone and wavered in the sun like a tide of burning brass. "It is now a sight of splendid evil!" exclaimed he. "But upon that mountain shall yet be enthroned a Sovereign, before whom the sun shall hide his head, and at the lifting of whose sceptre heaven and the heaven of heavens shall bow down! To that mountain shall man, and more than man, crowd for wisdom and happiness. From that mountain shall light flow to the ends of the universe; and the government shall be to the Everlasting!"

The roar of the assault began, and my awful companion was recalled to the world. "I must see the end of this battle," said he in his old mixture of sarcasm and melancholy. "Man's natural talent for making himself miserable may go far, but he is still the better for a teacher. On the top of that hill there are twenty thousand men panting for each other's blood, like tigers; and yet without me, they would leave the grand business undone after all."

"But one word more," I cried, giving my

last look to the tower of Antonia, on which the eagle now glittered.

He anticipated me. "They are all safe—they are in the hands of Septimius, who will deal with them as become love and honour. He solicited the command, that he might provide for their security. They comfort themselves with the hope that you will return. But return you will never. They will be happy in the hope—until sorrow is too long shut out to find room when it comes; they love you, and will love you long; but there is an end of all things. And now, farewell."

"And now, onward," said I. "But every spot is crowded with the Roman columns. How am I to pass those spears?"

He laughed wildly, flung his arm round me, as of old; and ran, with the speed of a stag, round the foot of the hill, to an unobstructed side. The ascent was nearly perpendicular; but he bounded up the crags without drawing a breath, placed me on a battlement, and was gone.

Below me war raged in its boundless fury.

The enemy had forced their way; and the exasperated Jews, contemptuous of life, fought them with the rage of wild beasts. When the lance was broke, the knife was the weapon; when the knife failed, they tore with their hands and teeth. Masses of stone, torches, even dead bodies, every thing that could minister to destruction, were hurled from the roofs on the assailants, who were often repulsed with deadly havock. But they still made way; the courts of the Gentiles, of the Israelites, and of the priests, were successively stormed; and the legions at length established themselves in front of the inner Temple. A scream of wrath and agony at the possible profanation of the Holy of Holies, rose from the multitude. I leaped from the battlement, and showing myself to the people, demanded "who would follow me?" The crowd exulted at the sight of their well-known chieftain; and in the impulse of the moment we rushed on the enemy, and drove them from the court of the sanctuary. Startled by the sudden reverse, the Roman generals renewed their proposal for a surrender, and

Titus himself, at the most imminent hazard, forced his way to the portal, and besought me to surrender, and save the Temple.

But Jerusalem was marked for ruin. While I was in the very act of checking the shower of spears, I heard the voice of one of those extraordinary beings who, by mad predictions of the certain succour of Heaven, kept up the resistance while there was a man to be slaughtered. He was standing on the roof of a vast cloister, surrounded with a crowd of unfortunate men, whom his false prophecies were infuriating against the offer of life. I recognised the impostor, by whom the Roman mission had been destroyed. The legionaries pointed in vain to the flames already rising round the cloisters. But the predictions grew bolder still, and the words of truce were answered by showers of missiles. The flames suddenly burst out through the roof; and the whole of its defenders, to the number of thousands, sank into the conflagration. When I looked round after the shock, the impostor, without a touch of fire on his raiment,

was haranguing in a distant quarter, and, man or fiend, urging the multitude to their fate!

This was the day of days, the ninth day of the month Ab, the anniversary of the burning of the Temple by the king of Babylon. One thousand one hundred and thirty years seven months and fifteen days were past, from its foundation by our great King Solomon! My attack had repelled the legionaries; and Titus, exhausted and dispirited, began to withdraw the routed columns from the front of the Temple. It was the fifth hour: the sun was scorching up their strength; and I looked proudly forward to victory and the preservation of the Temple.

As I was standing on the portal of the court of the sanctuary, and gazing at the march of the defeated troops towards the tower of Antonia, I heard the voice of the Demoniac close to my ear.—"I told you that this day would end in nothing without me." I turned, but he was already far away among the crowd; and before I could even speak, I saw him, torch in hand, bound into the Golden window beside the

vail of the Holy place. The inner Temple was instantly in a blaze. Our cries, and the sight of the flames, brought back the enemy at full speed. I saw that the fatal hour was come; and, collecting a few brave men, took my post before the vail of the Portico, to guard the entrance with my blood.

But the legions rushed onward, crying out, that " they were led by the Fates," and that " the God of the Jews had given his people and city into their hands." The torrent was irresistible. Titus rushed in at its head, exclaiming, that " the Divinity alone could have given the stronghold into his power, for it was beyond the hope and strength of man." My devoted companions were torn down in an instant. I was forced back to the vail of the Holy of Holies, fighting at random in the midst of the legionaries, who now saw no enemies but each other. In the fury of plunder, they deluged the Portico and the Sanctuary with mutual blood.

The golden table of Pompey, the golden vine, the trophies of Herod, were instantly torn

away. Subordination was lost. The troops trampled upon their officers. Titus himself was saved only by cutting his way through those madmen. But I longed to die; and give my last breath, and the last drop of my veins, to the seat of Sanctity and Glory. I fought—I taunted—I heaped loud scorn and reprobation on the profaners—I was covered from head to foot with gore; but it was from the hearts of Romans—I toiled for death; but I remained without a wound. Yet, woe to the life that came within the sweep of my scimitar. The last blow that I struck was at an impious hand, put forth to grasp the vail that shut the Holy of Holies from the human gaze. The hand flew from the body; and the spoiler fell groaning at my feet. He sent up an expiring look, and I knew the countenance of my persecutor Cestius.

But a new enemy was come, conqueror alike of the victor and the vanquished—fire. I heard its roar round the sanctuary. The Romans, appalled, fled to the portal: but they

were doomed. A wall of fire stood before them. They rushed back, tore down the vail, and the Holy of Holies stood open.

The blaze melted the plates of the roof, in a golden shower above me. It calcined the marble floor; it dissipated in vapour the inestimable gems that studded the walls. All who entered, lay turned to ashes. So perish the profaners! But on the sacred Ark the flame had no power. It whirled and swept in a red orb round the untouched symbol of the throne of thrones. Still I lived; but I felt my strength giving way: the heat withered my sinews—the flame extinguished my sight. I sank upon the threshold, rejoicing that death was inevitable. Then, once again, I heard the words of terror; —"TARRY THOU TILL I COME."—The world disappeared from before me.

Here I pause.—I had undergone that portion of my career which was to be passed among my people. My life as a father, husband, citizen, was at an end. Thenceforth I was to be a solitary man. My fate had yet scarcely fallen upon me; but I was now to feel it, in the disruption of every gentler tie that held me to life. I was to make my couch with the savage, the outcast, and the slave. I was to see the ruin of the mighty, and the overthrow of empires. Yet, in the tumult that changed the face of the world, I was still to live, and be unchanged. Every sterner passion that disturbs our nature was to reign in successive tyranny over my soul. And fearfully was the decree fulfilled.

In revenge for the fall of Jerusalem, I traversed the globe to seek out an enemy of Rome. I found in the northern snows a man of blood: I stirred up the soul of Alaric, and led him to the sack of Rome.—In revenge for the insults heaped upon the Jew by the dotards and dastards of the city of Constantine, I sought out an instrument of compendious ruin:

I found him in the Arabian sands, and poured ambition into the soul of the enthusiast of Mecca.—In revenge for the pollution of the ruins of the Temple, I roused the iron tribes of the west, and at the head of the crusaders expelled the Saracens. I fed full on revenge, and I felt the misery of revenge!

A passion for the mysteries of nature seized me. I toiled with the alchemist; I wore away years in the perplexities of the schoolmen; and I felt the guilt and emptiness of unlawful knowledge!

A passion for human fame seized me. I drew my sword in the Italian wars: triumphed; was a monarch; and learned to curse the hour when I first dreamed of fame!

A passion for gold seized me. I felt the gnawing of avarice—the last infirmity of the fallen mind. Wealth came to my wish, and to my torment. In the midst of royal treasures, I was poorer than the poorest. Days and nights of misery were the gift of avarice. I felt within me—the undying worm. In my passion, I longed for regions where the hand

of man had never rifled the mine. I found a bold Genoese, and led him to the discovery of a new world. With its metals I inundated the old; and to my own misery, added the misery of two hemispheres!

But the circle of the passions, a circle of fire, was not to surround my fated steps for ever. Calmer and nobler aspirations were to rise in my melancholy heart. I saw the birth of true science, true liberty, and true wisdom. I lived with Petrarch, among his glorious relics of the genius of Greece and Rome. I stood enraptured beside the easel of Angelo and Raphael. I conversed with the merchant-kings of the Mediterranean. I stood at Mentz, beside the wonder-working machine that makes knowledge imperishable, and sends it with winged speed through the earth. At the pulpit of the mighty man of Wirtemberg, I knelt; Israelite as I was, and am—I did involuntary homage to the mind of Luther!

But I must close these thoughts, as wandering as the steps of my pilgrimage. I have more to tell; strange, magnificent, and sad.

But I must await the impulse of my heart.—Or, can the happy and the high-born, treading upon roses, have an ear for the story of the Exile, whose path has for a thousand years been in the brier and the thorn!

THE END.

PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.